The BULGE BUGLE

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION • VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE, INC.

VOLUME XVIII NUMBER 4 THE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN NOVEMBER 1999

Ft. Monroe, Va. Monument Unveiled



Presence of Belgium Fusiliers Adds to VBOB Reunion Success



REUNION REVIEW— NEWPORT NEWS, VA

by Jack Hyland, VP, Public Affairs

The hurricanes that hit the East Coast in mid-September proved to be long gone when the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge gathered in Newport News, Virginia, September 23rd to the 26th, for our 19th Annual Reunion

Sparkling blue skies provided sunny days and cool nights as the veterans and their families turned out in force to recall the victory in the Ardennes nearly 55 years ago.

Memories of those dark days in the forest of Belgium and Luxembourg, December 16, 1944, to January 25, 1945, were recalled over the five days the troops returned to the ranks.

(continued on Page 10)

— *REMEMBRANCE* —

DECEMBER 16, 1999

ARLINGTON CEMETERY, ARLINGTON, VA

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS — PAGE 8

VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE, INC.
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President's Message

The past two years that I have been privileged to serve as your president have been exciting ones. They have also been richly rewarding as together we have continued to "Make Our Mark" through the addition of new members and the formation of new chapters.



George C. Linthicum

In this Thanksgiving season, I am reminded of the strides we have made in the years we have been together. This was brought home to me at our 19th Annual Reunion in Newport News, Virginia. Later on in this issue of *The Bulge Bugle*, you will read about the reunion and the dedication of our newest monument at Fort Monroe, one of the U.S. Army's first military posts.

We are indeed grateful to the Post Commander, Colonel Don Miller and his staff, and to the U.S. Continental Army Band based at Fort Monroe, for helping to make the unveiling of the monument a highlight of our reunion.

For you who are counting, this monument is the third we have dedicated in 1999. The first took place in January at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, and was dedicated by the World War II Historical Federation during their annual reenactment of the Battle of the Bulge.

Later on, over the Memorial Day weekend, the Maryland-District of Columbia Chapter led by President Sid Lawrence, dedicated an impressive monument at Fort Meade, Maryland.

I would like to mention at this time how much we appreciate the contribution that the designer and builder of these monuments, Charles DeChristopher, the president of Charles DeChristopher Brothers, has made to the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge.

The time and special attention he has given to selecting the granite slabs, and forming the monuments and installing them has been what we all remember as "being above and beyond the call of duty."

We aren't done yet, because on December 16th, in conjunction with the 55th Anniversary of the start of the battle, veterans of the Battle of the Bulge in Orlando, Florida, area will dedicate a new monument. I hope as many of you in that region will join them for this event, and that in the future visitors to that popular area will visit this newest memorial.

All of these events have generated considerable news coverage that helps us to "Make Our Mark" not only about our organization, but just as important, they call public attention to newer generations about the battle in the Ardennes, and those who fought and won it.

These events are also rewarding to the veterans who take part in them. I can't tell you how many times before or after the ceremonies, members of the audience have come up to us and expressed their gratitude for what we went through during the battle.

This was particularly heart-warming at Fort Monroe, where members of today's army not only took time to attend the dedication, but afterward came up to individual members and simply said, "Thank you for what you did." I might add that this included many of the high-ranking officers in the audience. They haven't forgotten.

As I close out this message, and the two years I have been honored to serve as your president, I would like to express my thanks to so many of you have made my job such a pleasant one. With the memory of the reunion so fresh in my mind, I would like to thank Mark Meisner and David Gray, of the Hampton Roads Historical Reenactments group, along with members of their unit for their splendid support before and during the get-together. They were a big help.

And, as always, as they has been through the years, I want to thank Nancy Monson, our Administrative Director, and Lynne Eldridge for their support not only at the reunions, but all year around.

That goes for the members of VBOB's Executive Committee including our past presidents. George Chekan, a past president and editor of *The Bulge Bugle*, deserves a special thanks for putting out a first class publication, and for his patience with me as I try to meet his deadlines.

I have been lucky as president to have had strong support from the Immediate Past President Stan Wojtusik, who in addition to his chores as president of his local chapter, took on the post of chairman of the Reunion Committee. His untiring efforts on behalf of VBOB are much appreciate.

The support I have received from so many of you around the country has shown me that VBOB is a vibrant, growing organization that has made me proud to be a member.

I know you will give that same support to our new president John Dunleavy, who takes office December 16th, and will lead us into a new century, a new millennium. John is a dedicated member and I know brings a lot of dedication to his new post. Please join me in congratulating John and welcoming him as our new president.

As I said at the beginning of this message, it has been exciting to serve as your president these past two years--but I know I couldn't have done it without the backing of my Chief of Staff, my dear wife, Betty. I am grateful for the encouragement and support she has given to me, and to VBOB.

Now we look forward to our closing event of this year, the ceremonies at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Military Cemetery and Fort Meade, Maryland, December 15th and 16th. Join us there as we continue "Making Our Mark."

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE PHANTOM KNOWS...

I have followed with great interest dialogue on the "Phantom Division" begun in February by Edwin Kahner, continued in May and August. From 1 November 1944 until June 1945 I was a major in the G-2 Section, VII Corps, originally with duties as counter-intelligence officer, in charge of special teams such as CIC, MIA, POW, and order of battle.

For the two days prior to the German attack I was away from Headquarters at Bastogne. On 15 December I made a trip to Headquarters, 4th Division, on the outskirts of Luxembourg City. There I found considerable unease about the tactical situation, but sensed no real alarm. (Later I was to learn that General Barton had already cancelled all leaves in his decimated division.)

On return to Bastogne that evening after mess I sat down with Major Rudolph Sherrick, in charge of the G-2 operations desk from 8:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m., to give him a resume of what I had seen and catch up on the reports which had come in the last two days. Sherrick stated flatly: "We are going to be hit in the face any day now by a heavy attack." "What do you mean?" We then discussed back and forth the recent tactical intelligence and the overall strategic situation. He told me of the Luxembourg woman, Elise Dele, who had reported seeing across the Our River in Germany heavily camouflaged rubber boats and troop concentrations. All of this had been duly reported in our daily G-2 Report and in the periodic ISUMs which were sent out during the 24-hour period We discussed what First Army at Spa and First Army Group at Luxembourg City might think of it. We noted the statement in General Seibert's very recent intelligence estimate that, "The German front is even more brittle than our intelligence reports show," or words to that effect. Sherrick remarked: "He has his neck out a mile on this one." I emphasized the overall strategic situation: If our intelligence estimates were correct, that he was losing the war of attrition, Hitler had to try one more gamble before facing inevitable defeat. It would not be a limited counterattack to pinch off the exposed Schnee Eifel, but a genuine counter-offensive with everything poured into it.

I was so disturbed that I went over to see our counterparts in the G-2 Section, Majors Baird and Caldwell. I outlined our concerns about an immediate counter-offensive or at least heavy counterattack. "Have you heard of the rubber duck operation?" one inquired. "No." They explained the fazing in of the 75th Division and the assorted paraphernalia of soundtracks and dummy tanks and heavy artillery, a system with which I was familiar at Brest and elsewhere. I personally had seen trucks with 75th Division insignia going through Bastogne and wounded just what they were doing in our sector, because I never saw the 75th on a situation map.

The G-3 fellows explained all the German massing of troops, etc., on the other side of the river barrier as a reaction to our rubber duck operation, or at least in part brought about by that. I asked about bridging equipment and small boats, and a few other things that indicated offensive, not defensive operations. They assured me that the Germans had learned their lesson and would not dare attack in the face of our overwhelming air power. I pointed out that we had not been able to have any air reconnaissance for the last six days because of the weather, which had added to our unease. I left them a bit disturbed.

I went over to see my immediate superior, Lt. Col. Hauge. Hauge was a little more concerned, but assured me that the whole situation had been reviewed in detail by Eisenhower, Bradley, and the other top commanders within the past week or ten days. We decided to take it up with Col. Reeves, the G-2, next morning.

I still was not satisfied. I attempted to place a call to the 174th Field Artillery Group, with which I had served for over two years prior to 1 November 1944, headquarters in Lascheid, Belgium, backing up the 106th Division in the Schnee Eifel and the 112th Infantry Regiment of the 28th Division immediately to their south. I could not get through. I couldn't even get Corps Artillery at Beho. I wanted to warn my old comrades that they were likely to be hit in the face any morning by a heavy German attack. I thought about the lines being cut, and that I could drive up there, but after a tiring trip to and from Luxembourg City I did not relish starting out at 9:00 p.m. in blackout to drive to St. Vith and then out to Lascheid.

By the next morning, of course, it was too late. Col. Reeves came in to the Operation Room before Sherrick was going off duty at 8:00 a.m., and said, "Wilkey, Capt. (in charge of the operations desk in the day time) is down with the 4th Division for a couple of weeks, you know. Would you take over the operations desk until this intensive German activity calms down?" So I took over the operations desk of G-2 Section VIII Corps on 16 December, which I covered along with my other duties--later become also Assistant G-2 Air--until the end of the war.

The greatest "rubber duck" operation in history! The phantom 75th Division sucked in 27 German Divisions into our Corps sector. It was secure all right. Major Sherrick and I and the G-2 Section at Corps didn't know (I assume that least Col. Reeves knew). As for "signal intelligence," intercepts by the enigma machine were not passed down below Army Commanders and their special Bletchley Park liaison officer.

Now for the errors of Stephen Ambrose, so graphically pointed out by Felix Liebmann in the August issue (I believe Liebmann worked with 1st Lt. Fickelstein, head of the Order of Battle Team of VIII Corps).

That same single page, 181, of his very enjoyable and interesting book, *Citizen Soldiers*, contains several other errors. I do not know why any captain of the 4th Division should be "in a wood near St. Vith, Belgium, on December 14." The 4th Division was in the south of the Corps front round Luxembourg City. The area near St. Vith was held by the 106th Division. Between these two were the 28th Division and the 9th Armored Division. Captain Anderson could have been there, but it sounds unlikely.

Of course, the statement that the information in regard to "Elise Dele, a Belgian woman" and a "Polish soldier" going "to division intelligence. There it died." is absolutely wrong. It was passed to Army and adjacent corps. Army reported it, but by then Elise Dele was transformed into a German woman, which made the information seem perhaps less credible. Charles MacDonald's immortal "A Time for Trumpets" mentions Elise Dele on eight pages. On page 14: "A short time later, a digest of that message (28th Division report on Elise Dele) was on its way from Bastogne to the Belgian town of Spa, where at 15 minutes before midnight on December 14, a corporal entered it into the G-2 journal of the First United States Army. The message said much the same as the one that had gone to the VIII Corps, except that it erroneously identified the woman as German.

Another error: Elise Dele was not a Belgian woman. She lived two miles from Vianden, Luxembourg, near the boundary of the Oure River between Luxembourg and Germany. Furthermore, she had not "visited relatives on the German side." While plodding along to her home she had been abducted by a German patrol and taken by them across as far as Bitburg. (MacDonald, pages 11 and 12.)

Let's keep the record straight!

Malcolm Wilkey
VII CORPS HQ

MUSIC, MUSIC, MUSIC

The Glenn Miller story was well written but I am a person who looks for mistakes--but back to the story and the "Atlantic Ocean Crossing."

The name of the ship--"The Queen Elizabeth." It took five days to make the crossing and this was June 21, 1944.

We had music all the way over--what a way to live.

The Glenn Miller band stopped at our billet located after the war in a small town called Regenstrauf not too far from Regensburg in Germany.

John Desmond and I sang together. What a team, should have been on stage together in place of being a soldier.

James H. Lendrum
740 FA BN HQ

SNOW IN THE ARDENNES

This is in response to Fred W. Klooster, of the 899th Field Artillery Battalion, 75th Division, who asked in the August 1999 issue of *The Bugle*, on page 5, about snow during the Battle of the Bulge.

The width of the Ardennes battlefield was 85 miles and the weather varied in different sections and even in the same locale from hour to hour. Heavy snow fell on some sections of the front on December 22 and 23. Yet there was limited air activity on the 22nd and on the 23rd the Ninth Air Force Medium bombers and fighters were extremely active. On the 23rd the 101st Airborne received its first air resupply.

John G. Westover
ETO Historian

(continued on next page)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE SHOW MUST GO ON

The February 1999 *Bulge Bugle* had an article on page 11, "106th AAA Battalion," by Gus Theodore. It mentions a USO show with Marlene Dietrich in Eupen, Belgium.

I remember the USO show and Marlene Dietrich very well. The show was held in Verviers, a little south and west of Eupen, on December 16, 1944.

Early that morning a V-1 hit an apartment building a few kilometers from our CP. It was a beautiful morning and, when I was sent to assess the damage, our executive officer wanted to go along.

We were less than half a mile from the CP, in front of a typical Belgian farmhouse with the family on the second floor and the cows below with the family's wealth piled outside. We heard an artillery shell coming in and the executive officer bailed out and hit with a splash in the farmer's wealth.

Since we thought we were out of range of German artillery, I tried to determine the direction and estimate the size of the rounds. There were about six. I was able to get enough shell fragments to determine the rounds were almost 300 millimeters in diameter and they were control fragmentation shells.

I went back to the CP and, while the Lt. Col. took a bath (I don't know where he found the water), I called First Army and described the shell fragments and direction of the flight. Army sent two experts to evaluate the artillery fragments and measure the shell holes. One of the rounds hit within ten feet of me and ruptured my left ear drum and broke the stapes. This ear became infected and I spent about a week in, I think it was, the 298th General Hospital in Liege the first week of January.

After all of this excitement, I called Army and asked if we should cancel the USO show with Marlene Dietrich, scheduled for that afternoon. The answer was to tell her the situation and leave the decision to her. She was in Verciers and, when I went to see her, her answer was, "If your men can be there, I will be there."

The theater was packed and I don't remember any flag rank officer. I remember she sang "Lily Marlane," the song Axis Sally used to sing to make GI's homesick.

Irby C. Lightner
103 AAA GP

MORE ON THE SNOW

I enjoy the magazine very much. I read it from cover to cover.

With respect to the item from Fred W. Kloosters, 75th Infantry Division, 899th Field Artillery Battalion, Battery B, "Let It Snow," I'll agree with him 100%.

I was in Bastogne from about 18 December through 27 December, 1944, and on Christmas Eve the sky cleared and a German plane dropped a bomb about 50 yards from where we were in a barn. Lucky no casualties. On 25 December the skies were clear and C-47 cargo planes dropped supplies in a field about 200 yards from the barn we were staying in.

I still have a part of a green parachute that landed Christmas Day. I also have a picture of the plane dropping them.

I had a brother who served with the 75th Infantry Division, 291st Infantry Regiment.

Harold R. Browning
9 ARMDD C

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

I say enough is enough about the bickering and disputing and disagreeing with letters of events that happened. I could name three events that happened, but I won't. They should all be damned lucky they got back home--not like my 60MM mortar gunner who was killed and a lot of others.

It took all of us to get it done.

Earl S. Reitz
11 ARMDD 63 AIB B

WEATHER REFLECTION COINCIDES

My recollection as to when the weather first cleared so that allied planes could fly during The Bulge coincides with that of Fred W. Klooster, of the 75th Division, in his article "Let It Snow" in the August issue.

In just a matter of days the 106th Division was decimated, having lost 12,000 men. The 7th Armored replaced us. We were back from the front just a short distance--don't recall the village--at Christmas. Four of us were invited to share Christmas Eve in the home of a Marie Godet.

The next day, Christmas, I recall while standing in the chow line for our noon meal, first hearing and then seeing wave after wave of our bombers. I saw seven shown down by German antiaircraft fire. That's the first time I saw our planes fly during the Bulge.

Harold M. Fruetel
106 INFD HQ

AMBROSE QUALIFICATIONS

This is in response to the attack on the qualifications of Dr. Stephen Ambrose in the August issue. It isn't necessary to come to the aid of Dr. Ambrose who, better than anyone since Ernie Pyle, understands war from a frontline soldier's viewpoint. His *Eisenhower* covers the rear echelon. *Citizen Soldiers* presents war from the understanding of those who sustained death and injury at such a higher rate the rear echelon could not comprehend. Nor could they have comprehended the misery at the front or they would have sent new clothes and equipment to the front instead of siphoning off for their own comfort.

Dr. Ambrose has done considerable research at the level where wars are fought and, since his research centered on those so involved and their stories, there must be some inaccuracies as there is in any publication. Those involved in the Bulge know that there was a breakdown somewhere in intelligence. Either there was a breakdown or we have the dumbest army leadership anywhere and I do not believe that. Exactly where and how the intelligence failed is not the issue. The issue is that it did.

If the author of the letter had restricted his comments to the facts, it would have been helpful, but his diatribe against a respected author and historian is not only uncalled for, but it weakens any correction that he may have presented.

James M. Power
11 ARMDD 55 AIB C

HE'LL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN

I received my August *Bugle* and was glad to see Clyde Boden's children in it. It made me feel we have not forgotten him. He was our officer in the 557th Antiaircraft Artillery (Automatic Weapons) Battalion.

I'm going to take the time one of these days and write a few encounters we had in the Bulge.

James F. Dempsey
667 AAA (AW) BN

IT CLEARED ON DECEMBER 24TH

Fred Klooster in August 1999 *Bugle* questions date air cleared for fighters and bombers. The "Air Command" book (page was enclosed) shows it was December 24, 1944, 2,046 bombers and 853 fighters flew!

I was in a 40 & 8 in France then, en route to 84th Division as a replacement in B-333, and recall all the contrails overhead as they flew to bomb and strafe in the Bulge, etc. I joined Company B after they were wiped out December 25th in a night attack on Germans!

I was with B-333 on to Elbe River where we captured Germans crossing to escape the Russians. I was fortunate to be unscathed. Two buddies were wounded or killed.

The 84th Division entered Germany in November, 1944, near Aachen, then to Bulge in December, where I joined them in Belgium.

Robert C. Lawrence
84 INFD 333 INF B

SNOW--RIGHT ON THE MONEY

Reference is made to the Fred W. Klooster letter "Let It Snow" regarding that day the weather finally cleared.

Well, I want to state this man is *(continued on next page)*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

right on the money. I must have jumped seven inches up off of my chair when I read his account. You are correct--December 25th. One I shall never forget.

On that day, it was around 11:00 a.m. I was half-heartedly trying to enjoy a make believe Christmas dinner at a small Belgian farm house, eating some sort of a stew out of my mess kit along side of a manure pile. But what helped the digestive system was, out of no where from horizon to horizon, we saw those beautiful B-17, B-24, P-51, P-38, etc. What an unforgettable sight. At that time our location was just south of Marche, temporarily attached to the 84th Infantry Division in support of the 334th Infantry Regiment.

Clyde M. Bucher
193 FA BN

SNOW--DECEMBER 23, 24 & 25

Reference: Fred W. Klooster letter concerning when the weather cleared.

I was at that time a member of the 2nd Armored Division. My notes, which I still have and which I kept on a daily basis, indicate that the weather on December 23, 24, and 25, 1944 was clear, in contrast to the conditions on the earlier days.

Martin Evans
2 ARMDD 41 AIR 1,2,3 BN L/C

A TRUE FRIEND--TILLIE KIMMES

As another ex-GI who has had some very moving times with our Luxembourg lady, Tillie Kimmes. Tillie and her late husband, Roger, guided my wife and I all over the 35th Division area of the Bulge on our first visit to Luxembourg in 1979. On our succeeding trips through the years we have had Tillie's guiding hand. In 1988 she and Erica Kohn visited us here in our home in Illinois.

In early 1955, Tillie and other members of CEBA coordinated the construction of the memorial to the men of C Company, 134th Infantry Regiment, 35th Infantry Division, who were KIA in the liberation of Weiswampach, Luxembourg, January 24-26, 1945.

On April 1, 1995, CEBA with Tillie and Camille Kohn heading the festivities helped the family of Rex Bowers dedicate this memorial. The way this was done could not have been accomplished without the help of this gracious lady.

A special place in our hearts is reserved for a true friend of ours, Tillie.

James G. Graff
35 INFD 134 INF C

TELEVISION DOCUMENTARY DISTURBING

I have recently seen another of the television documentaries on the Battle of the Bulge and it disturbs me that the producers of these films and other historians concentrate on the role of the 101st Airborne to the disregard of the other units which fought the battle.

As a member of the 7th Armored Division, I would remind the producers and historians that our division and attached units, risking encirclement, held the Germans at bay at St. Vith, Belgium, for six days (December 17-23) before withdrawing along the lines of the 82nd Airborne which held the Salmchateau area open for us to retire. Had the 7th not done that, the 101st might not have survived to be rescued by Patton's Third Army.

This letter is not intended to belittle the brave stand of the 101st nor the efforts of the Third Army to rescue them. It is written to help put the story into right perspective. According to the BOB certificate some 44 other units, in entirety or in part, participated in that great battle.

Let credit due fall where it truly belongs; it took all of us to win the battle! Historians, please remember this when you write of BOB in the future.

Charles E. Mills
7 ARMDD HQ

11TH BELGIAN FUSILIER BATTALION

I read with interest about the role of the Belgian Fusilier Battalions in their role of support to the United States during the Bulge. The 11th Fusilier Battalion was attached to the 80th Division during the Bulge and provided help with communications, refugees and the big problem, handling of the prisoners of war. We were short of men and in the deep forests we would have had to escort these prisoners back to a secure area. This task was handled by the 11th in our division area, both in Luxembourg and Belgium. I know they wanted to get into combat against the Germans, but most men had been in the Belgian Army and in the underground and if captured their lives would have been short.

A very close friend of ours was Jacques (Jock) H. Garain, from Drogenbos, Belgium (near Brussels). Jock used to meet us at airport or railroad stations and help us travel in the area. He was a representative from Belgium attending the annual Remembrance Day celebration in Ettelbruck, Luxembourg. Jock is a life member of the 80th Division veterans and has traveled to the USA to attend various veterans gatherings. We have traveled to Luxembourg-Belgium 26 times so we have a close relationship with Jock, who is the president of the 11th Fusiliers, called "Fraternelle, General Patton." These trips brought us into close contact with "Tillie" and other folks from CEBA.

One of the greatest honors was to be named an "Honorary Citizen of Ettelbruck" in 1988. Unfortunately, the great mayor for so many years of Ettelbruck, Edouard Juncker, passed away January 14, 1999. He was always ready to greet any returning veteran from the USA. Remembrance Day is Ettelbruck is an annual event that seeks to honor General Patton, the Third United States Army and the soldiers of the Third. They will continue this for ever and the younger generation is well aware of their liberators. For me, there is no country like Luxembourg. We all thank them for their help and hospitality. They always, always return the same message: "We will never forget what you did for us." They mean it.

Edgar E. Bredbenner, Jr.
80 INFD Historian

SAVING PRIVATE RYAN

It is a safe bet that most members saw the film "Saving Private Ryan" and feel it is the most realistic war show ever made. Which is not saying much. Some of Hollywood's epics were little more than jokes, as well as TV shows. Sort of a "WWII & Korea were fun: MASH, Hogan's Heroes. That horrow starring Vic Marrow that (thank God) slips my mind "The Longest Day?" was so bad the author Cornelous Ryan told the director and producers to not have name on the credits.

There was a paratrooper of the 101st Airborne Division, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, who did lose three brothers. His name was not Ryan, as memory serves, it was Fritz Meineck. An airborne hero Fr. Sampson located him fighting on the Mouse River, and brought him out for transportation back to the U.S. But there are flaws, the rangers were not mixed into the 1st and 29th. That unit did a hell of a job attacking the Point de Hoc, hundreds of yards from the Omaha Beach invasion area. The 29th was a national guard outfit, but well trained with good officers and great spirit. It was impossible for any member not being able to handle an M1, even a radio operator. There was a hell of a lot of talking while on patrol.

In June 1944 there were only a few SS units in Normandy and they were still elite, hardnosed SOBs with little or no brains to think about giving up. There was a saying the SS gave up: when they were out of ammo, rifle broke, bayonets bent, entrenching tools broke and mess knives kaput. If none of these existed they had a reason to surrender and you had to watch them like snakes. The worse was the SS unit leaving an MG 34 out in a field with no riflemen to protect it.

Great outfit this VBOB and a great news outlet. Keep up the good work.

James L. Mullaney
86 ABND 508 PIR A

PATTON ON ALERT

Thank you got *The Bulge Bugle*. I enjoy reading it. It brings back old memories of great battles fought by brave soldiers.

I enjoyed the story about General Patton being put on the alert. If General Patton had been in the area and they had turned him loose, there would have been no Battle of the Bulge. He would not have let them amass the armor.

He was the greatest combat general who ever lived. I spent all my time as a grunt in the front lines laying mines in no man's land with nothing in front of us but Germans. He was the only

(continued on next page)

TWO BATTLE OF THE BULGE NURSES HONORED

Honored this past spring were two brave World War II Battle of the Bulge Army nurses—Ruth Puryear, 107th Evacuation Hospital, and Helen O'Neil, 4th Auxiliary Surgical Group.

Ruth Puryear was a member of the Evacuation Hospital which received the Presidential Unit Citation for safely evacuating 400 wounded during the frigid winter of 1944 from Bastogne, Belgium, just in front of the oncoming German Army. After three days of travel over difficult terrain, the wounded finally arrived at a safe place in France. Thanks to the watchful care of the nurses and other medical personnel, all of the wounded survived.

Another of Ruth's interesting experiences during the Battle of the Bulge included a young seven year old Belgian boy, Andre Meurisse, badly wounded by shrapnel, who was brought by several G.I.s to the 107th Evacuation Hospital. Civilians were not usually cared for in the military hospitals. However, this young Belgian did receive the needed care and recovered. Ruth Puryear was his nurse. In 1988, when a group of Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge were on tour in Belgium, this same boy—now a man of 51 years—had read in the local newspaper about the Americans traveling to his country. He joined the group in Liege to see if someone would know of the 107th Evacuation Hospital—he found the nurse, Ruth Puryear, who had cared for him. What a reunion! They have been the dearest of friends ever since.

As his way of honoring his nurse on this 55th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, Andre coordinated with the officials of Bastogne and of Belgium to have special events honoring Ruth over Memorial Day, May 31, 1999. Ruth and her daughter Robin traveled to Belgium and were noted guests at a number of ceremonies, receptions, and dinners. ***The photograph below shows Ruth (still able to get into her Army nurse's uniform) saluting at the Mardassonn large memorial near Bastogne). To her immediate left is Andre, her special patient.***



Ruth resides in Richmond, Virginia, and is a long-time member of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. She has been on several of their trips overseas as well as assisting with many of the commemorative events.

Helen O'Neil, Army nurse, received five Battle Stars for her service with the 4th Auxiliary Surgical Group, part of that time during the Battle of the Bulge. She was also awarded a Commendation Medal from the 6th Armored Division. The 4th Surgical Group arrived in Europe on D-Day plus 15, and its assignment was to move from hospital to hospital doing neurosurgery. She was the only nurse with this small group of doctors and technicians.

When the World War II Monument Committee heard that she would like to contribute to the fund, she was invited to a special reception at the Battle Monuments Commission Office and presented her contribution directly to Major General Herrling, Secretary, Battle Monuments Commission. A number of the staff attended the reception and stayed to hear Helen's fascinating stories of her experiences 55 years ago.

Helen resides in Washington, D.C., and is a faithful supporter of the Battle of the Bulge Historical Foundation as well as the Women's Overseas Service League.

Our congratulations and gratitude to these two gallant ladies who, even after 55 years, continue to serve our country.

Dorothy S. Davis, R.N.
Battle of the Bulge Historical Foundation

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

general I ever saw on the front lines or even in no man's land. None of the battles I was in stick to me like a situation we ran into in our travels and that was the liberation of a slave labor camp--that still gives me nightmares.

Dale L. Shoop
1 INFD 1 ENGR CMBT BN B

THE SUN MADE THE COLD BEARABLE

I'm writing in response to the question of when did the weather clear in December during the Battle of the Bulge. According to the history of my outfit, the 24th of December was a cold. crisp winter day. The sun was out, making the cold more bearable, and it was the first time we saw American bombers heading for Germany. We cheered and wished them luck.

Anthony F. Supkowski
200 FA BN A

TILLY--THE THUNDERBOLT

The 11th Armored Division Association was most pleased to see that you had chosen Tilly Kimmes to be the "Cover Girl" of the May 1999 issue of *The Bulge Bugle*.

During the year-long celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Bulge in 1994-95, many "Thunderbolts" and their family members visited Luxembourg--where they were met by Tilly Kimmes and her trademark "Liberators' Welcome." Thanks to Tilly's kindness and hospitality during their visits, all of our members had a wonderful time in Luxembourg--and left the country feeling as if they had been reunited at last with a long-lost relative or friend.

In 1996, the 11th Armored Division Association bestowed Honorary Lifetime Membership upon Tilly, in recognition of her assistance to former Liberators visiting Luxembourg, her contributions to veterans' organizations in the U.S., and her furtherance of the aims of our association.

The Thunderbolts will always hold a special place in their hearts for Tilly Kimmes. And Tilly will always hold a special place in her heart for the Thunderbolts and all of her "Boyfriends."

Patrick J. Kearney
11 ARMDD 55 AIB A

A GOOD, WARM SPOT

The August *Bugle* has a chateau outside of Bastogne that was a hospital. I remember taking a German prisoner who was wounded there in one of our ambulances. When we got there, the doctor didn't want to treat him and I told him that my orders were to bring him there and I left him.

On the way back in the warmth of the ambulance, I fell asleep and awoke when a plane buzzed us. I don't know if it was one of ours, but it was a moonlit night and he may have seen the crosses.

Anyway, it was the only warm place in the freezing weather.

Manuel Ribeiro, Jr.
11 ARMDD MP

RESERVATION FORM
"REMEMBRANCE AND COMMEMORATION"
55TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

December 15 & 16, 1999
Washington, DC Area

Return form and check by December 4, 1998 to:
Battle of the Bulge Historical Foundation
P.O. Box 2516, Kensington, MD 20895-0181

Dorothy Davis
Telephone: 301-881-0356

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Battle of Bulge Unit: _____

Name of Spouse/Guest: _____

I/we will attend the following activities (please complete):

		No. Persons Attending:	Cost/ Person	Total Cost
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1999:				
10:15 a.m.	Visit to the New Ft. Meade Museum	_____		
12:30 p.m.	Luncheon at Ft. Meade Gold Course	_____	$12.00	24
1:45 p.m.	Visit the Battle of the Bulge Room	_____		
1:45 p.m.	Visit the National Archives II (Adelphi, MD) (Share a Ride)	_____		
6:00 p.m.	COMMEMORATIVE BANQUET Ft. Meade Officer's Club	_____	$38.00	_____
	Please select your dinner main course: ___ Prime Rib of Beef au jus ___ Stuffed Fillet of Flounder			
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1999:				
9:45 a.m.	Bus to Arlington Cemetery (Round trip) Departs Holiday Inn Lobby Those not staying at the hotel may also ride the bus...make reservations and pay fare.	_____	$10.00	20
11:00 a.m.	Ceremonies: Tomb of Unknown Soldier/VBOB Memorial			
1:15 p.m.	Change of Command Luncheon/Holiday Inn	_____	$8.00	16
	Total Amount Enclosed:			$ 60

(Make checks payable to "BoBHF Commemoration")

Banquet Dress: Business suit/black tie/military dress uniform. (Miniature medals encouraged).

REMINDERS:

Room reservations must be made by December 1, 1999/Tel: 1-800-477-7410
Return completed Reservation Form by December 4, 1999 (Tel: 1-301-881-0356)
No cancellation refund after December 5. 1999.

COME JOIN YOUR FRIENDS!

"REMEMBRANCE AND COMMEMORATION"
55TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

December 15 and 16, 1999
Washington, DC Area

The Holiday Inn, 3400 Ft. Meade Road (Route 198), Laurel, MD has been selected as the hotel for the Commemoration of the 55th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, December 15 and 16, 1999. This is a new addition to the former Holiday Inn and is located a few minutes outside of Ft. Meade, MD where some of our activities will be held. The reduced rate of $79.00 plus tax will be available for any night(s) between December 13 and December 18 (single or double occupancy). For room reservations please call *The Holiday Inn, 1-800-477-7410 by December 1.* Be sure to mention that you are attending the Battle of the Bulge events.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1999:

8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	**Registration (outside Hospitality Room); receive name tags and Banquet tickets. Registration and Hospitality Room will also be open on Tuesday evening, December 14, 1999, 7:00-9:00 p.m.**
8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	**Hospitality Room/Exhibits/Displays hosted by John Bowen and Earle Hart, Battle of the Bulge historians. COME MEET YOUR FRIENDS!**
10:00 a.m.	**Travel by private car to the Ft. Meade Museum**
10:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.	**A visit to the Renovated Ft. Meade Army Museum** ***Reception with Ft. Meade officials** ***Greetings from Ft. Meade** ***Tour of the exhibits and displays**
12:30 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.	**Luncheon at the Ft. Meade Golf Course**
1:45 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.	**Viewing of the Battle of the Bulge Historical Room** **Return to hotel. Free time**
1:45 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	*Note:* **For those who would like to visit the Archives II, Adelphi, MD, John Bowen will be available to give you a tour of this interesting facility.** ***About 35 minutes from the hotel.***
6:00 p.m.	**Banquet at the Ft. Meade Officer's Club**
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	**Social Hour/Cash Bar**
7:00 p.m.	**Guests seated/Color Guard/Welcome Ceremonies** **Dinner served** **Program: The speaker will be noted historian *LEWIS SORLEY,* author of the book, *Thunderbolt,* about General C. Abrams.**
After the Banquet:	**Hospitality Room will be open**

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1999:

10:00 a.m.	**Bus transporation will be provided for trip to Arlington National Cemetery**
11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	**Impressive ceremony, placing of wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, followed by the Ceremony of Remembrance at the Battle of the Bulge Memorial**
12:15 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.	**Return to Holiday Inn**
1:15 p.m.	**Buffet Luncheon, Holiday Inn** **Swearing in of new officers. Comments by incoming President**
2:15 p.m.	**Farewell**

REUNION REVIEW

(continued from Page 1)

Those memories were vividly recalled on Friday morning, September 24th, when the members of VBOB were joined by the 5th Belgian Fusiliers and high-ranking officers of the U.S. Army at Fort Monroe for the unveiling of a monument to the battle.

The granite memorial honors the 600,000 American men and women who fought and won the largest land battle ever fought by the United States Army. A battle that overcame the desperate attack of three German armies, and hastened the end of World War II in Europe.

The veterans looking on as the monument was dedicated also remembered the nearly 20,000 comrades who gave their lives to make that victory possible.

Welcoming the audience to the ceremonies, Stan Wojtusik, VBOB Vice President for Military Affairs, who served as m.c., cited the key role Fort Monroe has in the present army. It is the headquarters for the Training and Documents Command (TRADOC) which touches all aspects of modern day military readiness.

President George C. Linthicum, addressing the group, noted that at Fort Monroe the monument will be another reminder of the ideals we fought for 55 years ago, and the soldiers of the new millennium are called on to defend those same ideals at the turn of the new century.

A reception followed at the Chamberlin Hotel where Colonel Don Miller, Fort Monroe Post Commander, presented each Belgian Fusilier with a special commemorative medal.

A tour of Fort Monroe's Casemate Museum closed out the afternoon on the military post for the VBOB members who were then bused back to the headquarters hotel for a barbecue dinner, ending a very busy day.

The great weather continued as the veterans and their families boarded the buses once more, this time for nearby Norfolk and the opportunity to pay our respects at the Tomb of General Douglas MacArthur, and a tour of the MacArthur Museum Complex.

While many members are history buffs about our battle, this gave us a chance to look at World War II in the Pacific, as well as the so-called Forgotten War, the conflict in Korea, where MacArthur played such a leading role.

While the side trips are always highlights of VBOB reunions, the chance to renew World War II friendships, and exchange combat experiences with one another make the reunions almost family reunions.

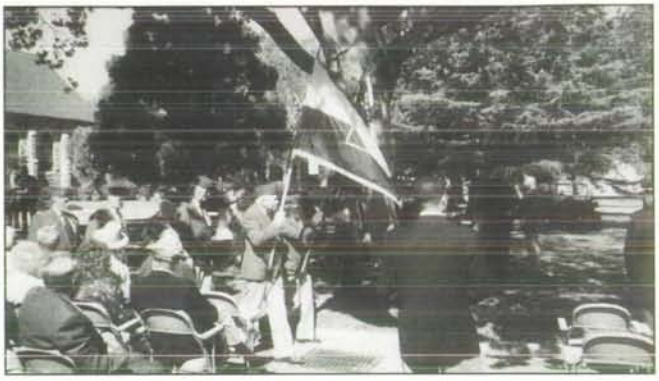
This was emphasized by President George Linthicum at the closing banquet Sunday night. Linthicum noted that while many veterans organizations call their get togethers "annual meetings or conventions," we hold our as reunions, like almost family reunions.

In keeping with that theme, we were honored to have as our guest speaker, four star General John Abrams, Commanding General of TRADOC. Linthicum noted that while General Abrams is a great leader and soldier in his own right, we were also proud to welcome him as VBOB family. General Abrams is the son of Colonel Creighton Abrams, who led the 4th Armored Task Force into Bastogne, December 26th, 1944, breaking the German ring around the beleaguered village.

General Abrams told of visiting the battlefield as a young boy with his father, and hearing of the takers' epic fight to open the corridor into Bastogne, linking the paratroopers with the attacking Third Army on the southern shoulder of the Bulge.

He also assured us that the men and women of today's U.S. Army are mindful of the legacy handed down from the GI's who served before them, and stand ready to answer the call when their country calls them today and in the future.

General Abrams received a standing ovation from the members at the banquet, and those who attended this 19th Annual Reunion agreed that President Linthicum, Reunion Chairman Wojtusik and his committee also deserve another standing ovation for making the yearly get-together a memorable one for all who attended.



FORT MONROE, VA —SEPTEMBER 24, 1999 Belgian Fusiliers pass in review at VBOB Monument Ceremony.



NEWPORT NEWS, VA - SEPTEMBER 26, 1999

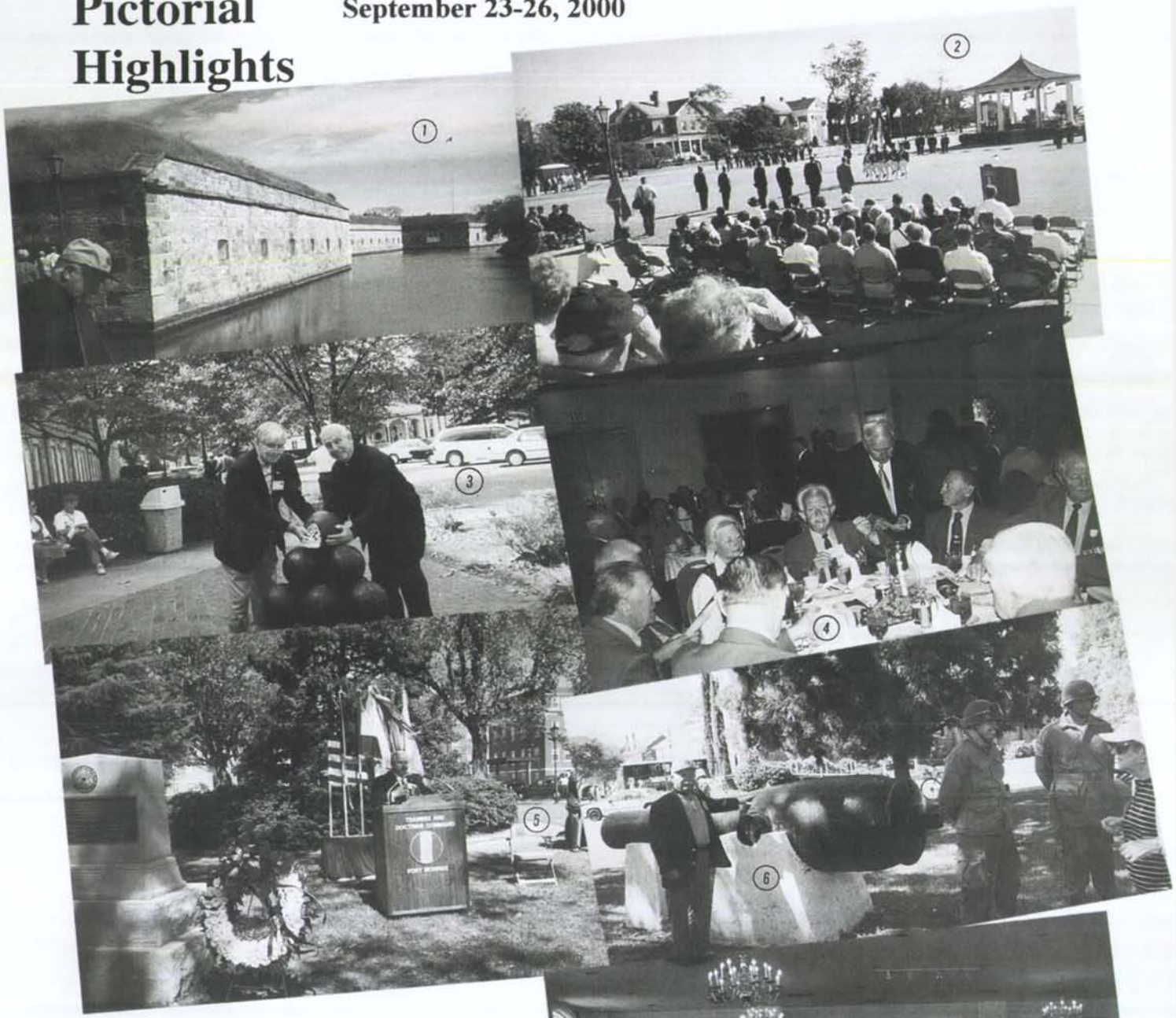
At the reception before the Annual VBOB Banquet—
Stan Wojtusik, VP, Military Affairs, the Reunion Chairman (106th ID);
Monsignor William O'Donnell, (87th ID) National Chaplain;
Gen. John N. Abrams, (USA) Commanding General, US Army Training & Document Command, keynote speaker;
George C. Linthicum, President (26th ID).



VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

Reunion at Newport News, Virginia
September 23-26, 2000

Pictorial Highlights



1. A visit to Casemate Museum–exhibit includes the prison cell of Confederate President Jefferson Davis.
2. Fort Monroe Pass in Review Ceremony–Parade Grounds.
3. At the Cannonball Stack–a good illustration on how to give yourself a hernia.
4. Stan Wojtusik goes over the dinner program with the Belgian Fusiliers.
5. MC Stan Wojtusik at VBOB Monument Ceremony.
6. Tony Strank inspects the heavy artillery.
7. Lunch at the historic Chamberlin Hotel–Ft. Monroe.

Photos by John Hyland and Henry Spignesi

YANK

The Army Weekly

1942 - 1945

By and For Men in the Service

Written and edited by enlisted men for enlisted men all over the world to spread news and entertainment.

June 17, 1942, Volume 1. Number l.

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt wrote:

"In *Yank* you have established a publication which cannot be understood by our enemies. It is inconceivable to them that a soldier should be allowed to express his own thoughts, his ideas and his opinions. It is inconceivable to them that any soldiers—or any citizens for that matter—should have any thoughts other than those dictated by their leaders."

First sold only to GIs overseas at $.05 cents per copy.

November 1941—Printed in England and Puerto Rico.

Summer 1943. Overseas editions started in Hawaii, Trinidad, Egypt, India, Australia and Iran. Panama was added in the fall.

March 1944. A tenth edition was printed in Italy. In Einewetok Atoll, *Yank* photographer Sgt. John Bushemi was killed.

On D-Day, photographer and artist Sgt, Pete Paris was killed.

By September *Yank* was being published in Paris and in Strasbourg

By November, 1945, *Yank* Correspondent Col. Bob Krell was killed in the airborne Rhine crossing.

1945. *Yank's* last four overseas printings were set up in Saipan in February; Manila in July; Okinawa in August;and in Tokyo in September just in time to serve incoming occupation troops.

December 31, 1945. *Yank* received its Honorable Discharge from Chief of Staff Dwight D. Eisenhower.

December 28, 1945. Volume 4, Number 28. Final issue.

Ah! Yes! I remember it well! Hollywood pin-up girls, George Baker's *Sad Sack*, Bill Mauldin's *Up Front*, *Soldier Speaks* opinion pieces, *Mail Call*, *Letters to Editor*, and many staff and guest columnists.

Richard Schlenker



"Look, that guy's got a chicken on his shoulder—I'll bet he's the cook!"

REGIONAL WORKSHOPS

In keeping with National VBOBs desire to be of all possible assistance to our menbers and chapters, a workshop was planned and held in August 1999 at the Picatinny Arsenal Club in Wharton, NJ.

Representatives from chapters in Eastern Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey were invited to attend. Thirty members from eight chapters were present.

The meeting was arranged by Peter Leslie and the discussions were led by Judy Greenhalgh, both of the Lehigh Valley Chapter.

Discussion groups were held covering a variety of subjects. Following lunch, the assembly heard from the various groups. Subjects included Hospitality, Programs and Speakers, Program Sources, Recruitment, Newsletters and Meeting Notices, and Outreach to Schools. The exchange of plans and information proved to be exhilirating.

Four chapters found the occasion so useful that they formed a regional organization to meet at least annually. They are: Ft. Dix, Picatinny, Mid-Hudson Valley and Lehigh Valley. Also considering affiliation are Ft. Monmouth, NJ, Staten Island, NY and Susquehanna. The Group will be known as The Metropolitan Region and is organized for mutual aid and camaraderie.

There are some other natural groupings of chapters around the country within reasonable travel distance of each other where similar workshops and regional organizations might be helpful. Your national staff stands ready to assist in any way possible. Let us work together to preserve our special fraternity.

Richard Schlenker



ON APRIL 20, 1939, Adolf Hitler, the Fuhrer of the German Reich, was 50. He had told Sir Nevile Henderson that be would rather have war before he was too old.

Britain called it 'Hitler's War'. The Nazi encyclopaedias named it 'the English war against Germany'.

Four months later Hitler and Stalin signed a pact which neither of them intended to keep. And at dawn, on September 1, the German Panzers and bombers struck at Poland. The pattern was set for so many invasions; the first *Blitzkrieg* began.

—From Twenty Tremendous Years

MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

LEO E. McCOLLUM would appreciate hearing from anyone who served with the **153RD FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION**. Please write to Leo at: PO Box 7151, Midland, Texas 79708.

Stephanie Johncox is looking for information concerning her father, **RUSSELL V. JOHNCOX, 101ST INFANTRY DIVISION**. He was wounded in the BoB, receiving facial injuries when a mortar hit the trees. He trained at Ft. Bragg and shipped to England. Nicknames were Russ, Sonny, and John. She would appreciate hearing from anyone who may have known him or about him. Write to her: 7500 Beulah Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22315-3637.

ROMAINE D. MOUNTS, 744TH LIGHT TANK BATTALION, would appreciate hearing from any of the men with whom he served regarding a possible reunion. Write to Romain at: 700 North Rowdy Street, Las Vegas, Nevada 89131.

Patricia Maylan would appreciate hearing from anyone who may have known either of her two uncles: **DOYLE SPENCER, 7TH SERVICE EQUIPMENT, MOTOR TRANSPORTATION** and **GLEE SPENCER, 476TH QUARTERMASTER REGIMENT, ENGINEERING**. If you can help, write to her at: Rt 2, Box 122, Stuart, Florida 50250.

REGINALD L. SAWYER, 9TH ARMORED DIVISION, is searching for any information he can find regarding the family of **PVT. JAMES W. LAMOREAUX, 9TH ARMORED DIVISION, 60TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION, COMPANY C**, who was killed in action the night of 30 March, 1945, in Fritzlar, Germany.

Deiter Markland would like help in locating anyone who may have known his grandfather, **NOEL DEAN SEEKER, 11TH ARMORED DIVISION, 63RD ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION, COMPANY C**. Write to Deiter at: 118 West South Street, Remington, Indiana 47977.

G. B. BUCHANAN, 172ND FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, would like to hear from anyone who may have served with him. Write to him at: 4322 Tillman Road, Charlotte, North Carolina 28208.

Stan Bellens, on behalf of Nelly Burhenne, is trying to locate any information regarding **ALBERT N. CULLINS, 327TH INFANTRY REGIMENT** or **789th ANTIAIRCRAFT ARTILLERY BATTALION.** During the Bulge he was billeted in Trooz, Belgium. If you have any knowledge of Albert, write to Stan at: 4, rue de la Trompette, B4680 Hermee, Belgium.

Alex Gabbard is looking for information on **GARVEY R. CHEEK**. Garvey was with the 212th Coastal Artillery Regiment in Seattle, Washington, until about March 1944. After that he was with the **69TH INFANTRY DIVISION, COMPANY A,** as a rifle man. He stated to his family that he was in "the biggest battle of the war." So it was thought that he might have been in the Bulge. If you have any information, write to Alex at: 1829 Grubb Road, Lenoir City, Tennessee 37771.

LEBRO (LEE) TANGARONE, 731ST FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, BATTERY C, would like to find **GEORGE THREFALL** or any of the other men he may have served with. Write to Lee at: 1050 Cutler Street, Schenectady, New York 12303.

Associate member Antoine Nouens has located several items and would like some help, if possible, locating their original owners. He is in possession of a garrison cap (piping brown-white (also possible purple-white) and inside is written **HEIKKINEN, 39 610 107**. He also has a service jacket with PFC and **35TH INFANTRY DIVISION** patches. It bears the Victory Medal and American Campaign Medal. The jacket bears the name **WYMAN** and four numbers of the serial number are 5181. If you can help write to Antoine at: Vredestraat 173, 6511 AD Nijmegen, The Netherlands.

ROBERT J. RUDDY, 707TH TANK BATTALION, is seeking information from anyone who may have known **JAMES CYRIL ABELL, 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION**. Write to Bob at: 215 Flat Creek Court, Peachtree City, Georgia 30269.

New member **ARTHUR V. WHITELEY, 102ND CAVALRY GROUP, 38TH CAVALRY SQUAD (MECH), COMPANY A,** would like to hear from anyone he served with. Write to him at: PO Box 141728, Austin, Texas 78714.

Associate member Mary Ann Dean would like to hear from anyone who remembers her father: **CHARLES E. WILSON, 2ND INFANTRY DIVISION, 38TH INFANTRY, COMPANY B**. Can you help? If so, write to: 1189 Gibbsboro Road, Kirkwood, New Jersey 08043.

Beverly B. Lollar, a new associate member, is interested in learning more about her father's experiences. Her father was: **RAYMOND CLARK BRANDT,** with **2ND INFANTRY DIVISION, 23RD INFANTRY REGIMENT, COMPANY A**. Write to Beverly at: 812 Ascot Lane, Raleigh, North Carolina 27615.

Pattonspeak

The enlisted men loved General Patton's profanity such as:

'There's one great thing you men can say when it's all over and you're home once more. You can thank God that twenty years from now, when you're sitting around the fireside with your grandson on your knee and he asks you what you did in the war you won't have to shift him to the other knee, cough, and say, "I shoveled shit in Louisiana"'*

**The Patton Papers* (Vol. 2) by Martin Blumenson

26-30 JANUARY 2000
REENACTMENT
of the BATTLE OF THE BULGE
FT. INDIANTOWN GAP, PA

For information and Registration Form
Send Self-addressed stamped envelope to
John Bowen, 613 Chichester Lane
Silver Spring, MD 20904
Tel: 301 384-6533
(Deadline - December 31, 1999)

REUNIONS

55TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION, 11TH ARMORED DIVISION, May 29, 2000, Tillet (Sainte-Ode), Belgium. Contact: Patrick J. Kearney, 33-21 172 street, Bayside, New York 11358. Phone: 718-762-0342.

ARIZONA--VBOB State Reunion--all are welcome, December 16, 1999, Casa Grande, Arizona. Contact: Bob Boomer, 4956 North Valle Road, Tucson, Arizona 85750-9702. Telephone: 520-749-1197. Or in Phoenix area telephone Mike Mills 480-967-4470.

A TRIP TO THE DENTIST

I read an excruciating story about a young soldier who had a tooth extracted a few days after landing on Omaha Beach. The GI was not identified although he did serve in the 2nd Armored Division. It got me to wondering. Did any of you have a horrible experience such as this while in the Battle of the Bulge? We would like to hear about it.◘

BUZZ BOMB ALLEY

By William R. Milne
9th United States Army Air Force

The 95th DSS of the 2nd Air Depot Group was located off air base A-93 in the outskirts of Liege, Belgium. The mission of the group was to rebuild fighter planes for the 9th Air Force.

The 95th arrived in the area in October of 1944. By November, the Germans had the range for their V-1 buzz bombs. In two months 3,000 buzz bombs landed in the area. The V-1 had a wing span of 17 feet 8 inches and weighed 4,750 pounds. The operating speed was between 360 and 480 mph with a range of 150 to 200 miles carrying a 1,800 pound war head.

Some of the V-1's were hit by anti-aircraft fire prior to arrival throwing off their stabilizing system, making them appear like wild broncos as they passed overhead. One of the buzz bombs, proving that they were very erratic at times, was known to have circled the air base three times then headed back to Germany.◘

SERVICE MEDALS

A recent article, written by Historian Stan Polny, in the **78TH INFANTRY DIVISION** newsletter *The Flash* contained some vital information regarding eligibility for service medals. If you would like one send us a self-addressed envelope containing a 33 cent postage stamp. Mark the outside of your mailing envelope "MEDALS" and it will expedite our complying with your request.

CHECK YOUR MAILING LABEL...

to see if your dues are due. Date above your last name is date they were due.◘

5TH FUSILIERS RETURN HOME

After an extensive trip to the United States where they attended the VBOB Reunion, the Belgian Fusiliers have returned home. We received the following letter from them:

October 4, 1999

Mr.George C. Linthicum
President, VBOB Association

Dear Mr. President:

It has been a real pleasure and honor for the 30 members of our delegation to meet you and all members of the VBOB Association at Fort Meade and Newport News.

We have deeply felt how strong are the feelings between you, your friends, and us. During the few days we have shared with our friends in the USA, we have met the same great friendship we had with our American comrades-in-arms during the Battle of the Bulge and the campaign of Germany.

Please convey our best consideration and thankfulness to those we met: Msgr. O'Donnell, George Chekan, Stan Wojtusik, Bill Greenville, Dorothy Davis, Nancy Monson and Darrell Kuhn.

We wish John Dunleavy a long and successful period as President.

We hope to see all of you again soon. Again, our gratitude for the appreciated attention you and your friends had for us.

Yours sincerely,

For Marcel D'Haese
National Chairman, 5th Fusiliers Association

By Roger Hardy
Chairman, VBOB Chapter 38
5th Fusiliers of Belgium

THE ARMY SONG

First to fight for the right, and to build the nation's might,
and THE ARMY GOES ROLLING ALONG.

Proud of all we have done, fighting till the battle's won,
and THE ARMY GOES ROLLING ALONG.

Then it's Hi! Hi! Hey! The Army's on it's way
Count off the cadence loud and strong!
For where e'er we go, you will always know
That THE ARMY GOES ROLLING ALONG.

101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION
502ND PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT
2ND BATTALION
HONORED

The above battalion (and its attached anti-tank squads) were honored on July 25, 1999, by the authorities of the Province of Luxembourg, Arrondissement de Bastogne, in Longchamps, Belgium, with the dedication of a monument.



The inscription on the above monument reads: "Near here, along the Longchamps-Monaville line, in December 1944 the 2nd Bn. 502nd Parachute Inf. Regt. supported by AT/AA Bn. of the 101st Airborne Division courageously defended the Bastogne perimeter."

Edward A. Peniche and Ed Manley, both of the battalion, were in attendance at the ceremonies. An honor guard from Fort Campbell, Kentucky and representatives from the Belgian military were present, along with U.S. Embassy representatives and Belgian government officials.◘

BULGE MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS

ARTHUR O. BEYER
603RD Tank Destroyer Battalion

Rank and Organization: Corporal, United States Army, Company C, 603rd Tank Destroyer Battalion.

Place and date: Near Arloncourt, Belgium, 15 January 1945.

He displayed conspicuous gallantry in action. His platoon, in which he was a tank-destroyer gunner, was held up by antitank, machinegun, and rifle fire from enemy troops dug in along a ridge about 200 yards to the front. Noting a machinegun position in this defense line, he fired upon it with his 76-mm gun, killing one man and silencing the weapon. He dismounted from his vehicle and under direct enemy observation, crossed open ground to capture the two remaining members of the crew. Another machinegun, about 250 yards to the left, continued to fire on him. Through withering fire, he advanced on the position. Throwing a grenade into the emplacement, he killed one crew member and again captured the two survivors. He was subjected to concentrated small-arms fire but, with great bravery, he worked his way a quarter mile along the ridge, attacking hostile soldiers in their foxholes with his carbine and grenades. When he had completed his self-imposed mission against powerful German forces, he had destroyed 2 machinegun positions, killed 8 of the enemy and captured 18 prisoners, including 2 bazooka teams. Corporal Beyer's intrepid action and unflinching determination to close with and destroy the enemy eliminated the German defense line and enabled his task force to gain its objective.

MELVIN E. BIDDLE
517th Parachute Infantry Regiment, Company B

Rank and Organization: Private First Class, United States Army, Company B, 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment

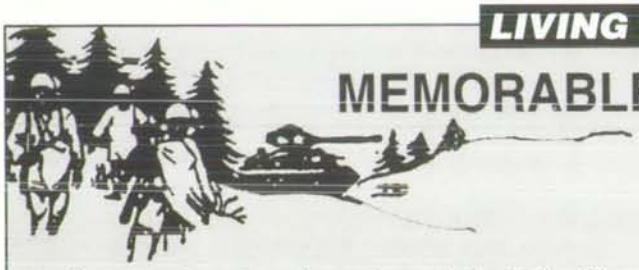
Place and Date: Near Soy, Belgium, 23-24 December 1944

He displayed conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against the enemy near Soy, Belgium, on 23 and 24 December 1944. Serving a lead scout during an attack to relieve the enemy-encircled town of Hotton, he aggressively penetrated a densely wooded area, advanced 400 yards until he came within range of intense enemy rifle fire, and within 20 yards of enemy positions killed three snipers with unerring marksmanship. Courageously continuing his advance an additional 200 yards, he discovered a hostile machinegun position and dispatched its two occupants. He then located the approximate position of a well-concealed enemy machinegun nest, and crawling forward hurled three hand grenades which killed two Germans and fatally wounded a third. After signaling his company to advance, he entered a determined line of enemy defense, coolly and deliberately shifted his position, and shot three more enemy soldiers. Undaunted by enemy fire, he crawled within 20 yards of a machinegun nest, tossed his last hand grenade into the position, and after the explosion charged the emplacement firing his rifle. When night fell, he scouted enemy positions alone for several hours, and returned with valuable information which enabled our attacking infantry and armor to knock out two enemy tanks. At daybreak he again led the advance and, when flanking elements were pinned down by enemy fire, without hesitation made his way toward a hostile machinegun position and from a distance of 50 yards killed the crew and two supporting riflemen. The remainder of the enemy, finding themselves without automatic weapon support, fled panic stricken. Private Biddle's intrepid courage and superb daring during his 20-hour action enabled his battalion to break the enemy grasp on Hotton with a minimum of casualties.◘

2000 REUNION
Holiday Inn (Garden of the Gods)
Colorado Springs, Colorado
August 31 depart September 4, 2000

Make your reservations early.
Telephone number for the hotel is 1-800-962-5470.

REMEMBER--IT'S PIKE PEAK OR BUST.



LIVING LEGENDS

MEMORABLE BULGE INCIDENTS

UNEDITED AND HERETOFORE UNPUBLISHED

Accounts of events and experiences in the Battle of the Bulge as recalled and expressed by veterans of the greatest battle ever fought by the U.S. Army in the greatest war ever fought are of much historical significance. These "close-up" combatant accounts are a complement to the study of strategy and logistics and are a legacy of an important battle and victory in the U.S. military annals.

These are priceless first-person recollections by living legends in what General Dwight D. Eisenhower foresaw as our greatest victory and Prime Minister Winston Churchill, in speaking before the House of Commons, characterized as an ever-famous American victory.

CHRISTMAS IS SHARING

December 25, 1944

Jerry C. Hrbek
428th Military Police Escort Guards
Voorheesville, New York

When wars are fought, time means nothing. You have morning and then its getting dark. After we had gotten some chow at the fresh air kitchen, I started to notice it was getting colder. Sgt. James informed us it was time we got back to our company headquarters at Eupen. We'd have to cross the Malmedy Mountains. For a time the Jerry paratroopers held the area. We were told the area was retaken, but you always get the so-called stragglers.

We got our gear together and took off. Our vehicle was an old German wood-burner, with white stars painted on it. All you needed was water and wood and it would run like a top. The road and pine forest were covered with a crisp snow that squeaked when you walked. You went up a grade then it flattened out, then another grade and flat again.

One guy drove the truck slowly, while the rest of us walked. It seemed we'd never reach the other side. About half way up, we came to a flat part and there in the center of the road was a lone Jerry, standing with his hands on his head. He was a paratrooper, by his garb, and a cold one at that. All he was wearing was a shirt and trousers--camouflaged. We walked up to him. He said "Kamerad, ich bein Deutscher." I replied, "Ich bein Amerikaner." "Ist gut," he replied. We frisked him--he was clean. No weapon, nothing in his pockets. Just an ordinary guy out for a walk in shirt and trousers. He didn't speak English. I asked him "if he was alone." He said, "Ja, ja." We were worried about the rest of his outfit. You get the feeling a thousand Jerries are watching you. One of the guys with us walked over to him and straight armed him in the face I pushed him out of the way and aid, "Maybe you'd like pushing all his friends watching us from the woods. Wise up, you damned fool." I turned to the Jerry and said, "All is good." He looked worriedly at the jerk and said, "It is cold."

I took a blanket from the truck. With my trench knife, I slit a hole in the middle of it and told him to put it over his head. It makes a good poncho. A piece of rope for a belt and he grinned from ear to ear. Much to our relief no one else showed up. I pointed to the road and told him to march. We finally started down the other side and arrived in Eupen by 2 o'clock in the afternoon. The place looked deserted, it was too cold to be out.

Our headquarters were in the old Gestapo building. It was a fenced-in area and was now set up as a huge kitchen, garbage cans and chimneys. We walked into the kitchen area--no one in sight. Sgt. James said, "Where is everyone." He disappeared into a building. We all stood there, a door opened across the yard. Chief came running out. He was one of two Cherokee Indians in our outfit. "Where in the hell did you guys come from, we thought you were all dead." "Not yet, Chief," I said. He was elated, shaking everyones' hands. He came up to me and said, "Hi, Yankee," and gave me a hug. "Hey, I got something for you," he remarked. He turned around, reached into a big square pan and pulled out the biggest turkey drum stick I had ever seen. He said, "Here you go, Yankee, and a Merry Christmas to you." I replied, "Christmas?" He said, "Yeah, today's Christmas--December 25." None of us had thought up until then of time. Somehow it was lost in the past ten days.

The Jerry was standing next to me--his eyes bugged out looking at the leg. I took it in two hands and took a big bite. I looked at him, handed the leg to him and said, "Hey, Hansi, essen und froelich Weihnachten." Hesitantly, he took it from me. Before he took a bite he said, "Weihnachten, heute?" (Today's Christmas?). "Oh, ja, froelich Weihnachten." The two of us demolished it--real quick. To think--there still was a Christmas.

.....

IT SEEMED WE WALKED FOR DAYS

December 1944

Carl J. Morano
26th Infantry Division
328th Infantry
Company D
McLean, Virginia

On the evening of December 19, 1944, I was getting a haircut from one of my buddies. We were in Metz, resting up. On the radio we heard the news that German soldiers were wearing American uniforms and were going to kidnap Eisenhower. We were in buildings and prepared to sleep for the night.

At 1:00 a.m., we were awakened and placed on trucks. We had no idea what was going on. We were not told anything. We rode on the trucks for hours. Then, we went on foot. S/Sgt Paul Soroka stepped on a mine and was killed. We were in Luxembourg and in the Battle of the Bulge.

It seemed that we walked for days looking for Germans. After a couple of days we found ourselves surrounded by the enemy. We were on a hillside enclosed by trees. On the 23rd of December, my fellow squad member, PFC Henry I. Simon, and I were walking together. German bullets came flying at us. I hit the ground and Simon dove into a hay stack. He came out later and showed me his rear end. He had been hit in the buttocks. He was taken away by the medics. I have never seen him since.

On the 24th, the skies clear up and American planes flew over us. On Christmas Eve, we attacked and took the nearest town. I believe it was Arsdorf. We had a turkey dinner. We moved out and slept on the frozen ground on Christmas night. I remember sleeping, sitting back on the ground with another squad member. From then on, it was continual walking and fighting until the end of the Battle of the Bulge.

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END OF BATTLE OF THE BULGE

January, 1945

Carl Ferguson
75th Infantry Division
Headquarters
Springfield, Missouri

[Carl provided us with a wonderful book for our archives in which he put together his war experiences for his family. We have excerpted the following with his permission.]

In Abrefontaine, our Artillery Command Post occupied the nearly destroyed building used by the 82nd Airborne Division's Artillery as their Advance Command Post about a week before during the battle to take that city. GI blankets covered the windows to keep out the blasts of cold air and to maintain good blackout discipline at night. However, the walls and roof of our building were intact. Most buildings in town had suffered considerable damage by friendly artillery and machine gun fire in the fight to drive out the Germans.

As I had been up all night the previous night, as soon as the CP was established I took my bedroll and climbed the narrow winding staircase in the musty cobweb-lined attic and unrolled my "sack" on a mound of threshed wheat. The very loud crack and crash of a battalion of friendly 155 howitzers in position only a block or less behind our CP, although deafening, did not keep me awake. During succeeding nights the loud bursting crack of incoming artillery shells became rather common.

Each night, usually before midnight, a single enemy plane, known as "bed-check Charley" up and down our front lines, circled overhead trying to pin point vulnerable American positions. On moonlight nights--and we had several at this location--the town of Arbrefontaine could be seen quite easily from the air. Obviously his mission was one of reconnaissance and intelligence with possibly the secondary motive of dropping a bomb or two on any target of opportunity that we might have carelessly exposed to the aerial observer, by failure to observe strict black-out precautions.

Division Headquarters had been noticeably lax in blackout discipline in previous positions and they paid dearly for their negligence here. During their first night in Arbrefontaine, a small enemy plane dropped an anti-personnel bomb through the roof of their headquarters mess killing a lieutenant colonel, the division signal officer and two enlisted men. Several large holes in the roof of their shelter had leaked through light to reveal their position to the enemy pilot. Major Broyles, 75th Division Artillery Medical Officer, had established his aid station across the street and was the first on the scene.

.....

ONE MORE STEP

January 17, 1945

Robert W. Rhynsburger
75th Infantry Division
290th Infantry
Company M
Arlington, Virginia

The next day, January 17th, we were ordered up to the front, but only after attempting to dig foxholes in the frozen earth in the woods behind the farmhouse. We marched east from Goronne in a single file, well dispersed, and each carrying his backpack, carbine, and other necessities; our heavy weapons were carried by the jeeps and trailers at our rear. We trekked a mile or so and came to the small Village of Rencheux. Passing through this village we came to a small narrow river, the Salm. The old bridge had been blown out and the 51st Combat Engineers were constructing a new one, but it was not as yet completed. So we had to unload the jeeps and trailers and carry all of the equipment forward. We hobbled across the river on big rocks; I was carrying eight rounds of mortar ammunition at this point instead of the usual six, as well as my pack, gas mask, and carbine. It was a load!

Earlier that day our First Battalion had sent combat patrols into Vielsalm and found it unoccupied by Germans and the battalion occupied the town at about 2:00 p.m. My Battalion, the Third, then was ordered to pass through the First Battalion in Vielsalm and to continue the pursuit of the Germans through Neuville towards Burtonville. After struggling across the river, we hiked up a very long steep, snow-covered hill in the Town of Vielsalm. We had covered maybe four or five miles since we left Goronne

by the time we got to the top of the hill and through Vielsalm. Our rifle companies and the machine gun squads were ahead of us. It was bitterly cold and the snow was very deep in the fields. Many of the ammo carriers almost fell out (including me), the trek was almost too much. My legs were very tired, especially after the relatively soft living we had had on the ship and the train. But with the boosting of the toughened-up sergeants, we kept putting one foot ahead of the other. One sergeant carried my carbine a short ways and sort of helped me along and talked with me--"each step we take is closer to going home." The sergeant's name was John A. Donahue.

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FRIED CHICKEN AND FRENCH FRIES

January, 1945

Virgil C. Blumhorst
802nd Field Artillery Battalion
Battery B
Tecumseh, Nebraska

One incident comes to mind--it started on a mild, clear day. Mess Sergeant Cariker asked me if we were going to stay in the present position for some time. I assured him, as far as I knew, we would. I asked him why he had asked. He said he had chicken that he could fry and potatoes he could French fry. I told him to go ahead. It sounded like we would have a great meal. But as you would guess, it was not to be. Less than an hour later, I was told we would be moving and left to look for a new position.

I found one and the weather had changed from clear to cloudy and snow began to fall. So I waited beside the road leading into my new position, keeping hidden because no one knew where the Germans might be.

Soon I heard a half-track coming down the road, from the opposite direction that my guns were supposed to come. I waited until I could make out the markings on the bumper of the half-track. It was from the 10th Armored Division which my friend, Hemminghaus, was in.

My guns arrived and I put the guns on one side of a wooded area and the trucks including the kitchen truck about 50 yards behind on the other side of the woods.

The French Fries and fried chicken were still served. The cooks did a tremendous job. I usually ate in or near the kitchen truck. The mess crew really took care of me. After I ate I went to relieve Taafel. He went to the mess truck for his meal.

After a while he returned swearing all the way. He was carrying his mess kit in one hand and his mess cut in the other. It was almost dark. What had happened was, in the dark he couldn't see where he was going, so guess who stepped in a fox hole? He spilled his supper. To top it all off, he claimed a dead German soldier was in the fox hole. Taafel just picked up his food and came back to the gun position. He claimed all of this is true and I believe him.

[Virgil prepared his remembrances for inclusion in our archives--it will be a proud addition.]

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511 ENGINEER LIGHT PONTON COMPANY AND 814 ENGINEER COMPANY (FB) PLAQUE

On October 7, 1989, a plaque was presented to the people of Redange, Luxembourg, by members of the 511th Engineer Light Ponton Company and their successors, the 814th Engineers.

The 511th was stationed in Redange during the winter of 1944 and were living in the homes of many of the residents. Our stay was cordial and a friendly relationship evolved and our long standing friendship still remains. A member of the 511th came up with the thought of presenting a plaque to the people of Redange in appreciation for all they had done for us during WWII.

The plaque was made, plans were made for the dedication and military arrangements were finalized by our today's successors, the 814th Engineers who were stationed in Hanau, Germany. The ceremony took place with the towns people and military fanfare was performed by the 814th. A wine reception was held after the ceremony, an open bar and a banquet was held in honor of the 511th and 814th members in attendance. A small contingent of men from the 511th flew over for the event. A plaque was installed on a large rough piece of granite and sets in their Memorial Park adjacent to the town cemetery. It reads:

Offert par 511th Engineer Light
Ponton Company/814th Engineer
Company (FB) a' la population
de Redange en remerciement
de son patriotisme ses sacrifices
et son hospitalite' 1944/45.

Sgt. Ralph Natale of the 511th, now living in Arizona, has a daughter Anne Marie, who is a history teacher in Phoenix. While teaching the subject of WWII, she emphasized how her father was in the U.S. Army Engineers in Europe and was settled in a little village in Redange, Luxembourg just prior to the Battle of the Bulge. As she got into the subject, Carlos, a little boy in her class, raised his hand and said he was from Redange, Luxembourg. Since his father relocated to the United States after his parents divorced, he decided to come to the States for his education. His mother, Theresa Andreosso, still lived about 5 km south of Redange, he said.

Anne Marie, knowing the plaque had been presented to the people of Redange back in 1989, wrote to the boy's mother asking her if she would take a few pictures of the Town of Redange and, of course, several pictures of the plaque so that she could surprise her father with a blown-up picture of the plaque. The mother responded with several pictures and a blown-up picture of the plaque beautifully framed which Anne Marie presented to his father as a surprise.□



On 'Crispin's Day' 1944, the people of England were not a-bed. By night the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, went out and watched rockets cascade on the capital—in the last desperate Nazi onslaught. The free world was striking with deadly effect towards the heart of the Reich and the days of Hitler's tyranny were numbered.

SOME MEMORIES OF WWII

Kenneth G. Myers
394th Medical Detachment
99th Infantry Division

I was 20 years old when I was drafted. After basic training at Camp Van Dorn, Mississippi, we went on maneuvers through Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas. Then we were shipped overseas with the 394th Medical Detachment for the 99th Division.

We were stationed at Hunningen where I drove a truck for the medics. One day I checked my gas tank and noticed that it was below the half-full mark. I went to the motor pool and asked Sgt. Seninsky for gas. He told me we had no gas. I said, "I will go to the Service Company and get some." When I got to the Service Company I found that they had none. I told Lt. Wartonbee that I would go and get some if he wanted me to. He seemed surprised that I would be willing to do that but I assured him that I would be glad to do it. He said, "OK, but the red crosses will have to come off your truck before you go." I told him that was no problem and he gave me a map. He said, "Follow this and don't go by the signs on the road." I started out on the trip, watching each road crossing and marking it as I crossed it.

When I got to the gas depot the Red Ball trucks were coming in. Each truck had only one layer of five-gallon gas cans. I got one driver to back up to my truck and started in the front to stock it to the top of the truck racks. I unloaded five trucks onto the one I was driving and started back.

When I got to the gate the guard stopped me and said, "What are you doing?" I said, "We need gas and I'm going to the front lines." He said, "With all that gas, what do you think will happen if it is hit with a shell or a land mine?" I said, "Not much more than if it was just one layer, please just let me go." He said, "You will never make it." I said, "Never is a long time."

He stepped back and I started out. Even with the heavy load I was carrying I had no trouble except trying to miss the large holes in the road. When I got back to the Service Company I went in and told Lt. Wartonbee I had the gas. He came out to the truck, I threw the flap up over the top of the truck and he said, "Hell's fire, Myers, how did you get all that gas on that truck?" I said, "I loaded it from the Red Ball trucks--you can have all of it but the last layer, that's mine."

I took it back to our motor pool and we filled all our jeeps. There were 12 cans left across the front of the truck. We covered them with full field packs and other equipment we were hauling.

The next morning the major called me and said, "I want you to take some money to the Red Cross." I got in the truck and went to the aid station. We loaded four or five bags on the truck and the major told me where to go and I was on my way.

I got to the town and there was a courtyard with a 25-foot-high wall with a big arch to drive through and a large planter in the middle. The planter was about 20 feet wide and 35 feet long. As I went through the arch I had to back up and turn sharper in order to get past the planter. I saw the Red Cross up in the corner of the courtyard. I drove around the end of the planter and down along the wall. I backed up to the loading platform, got out and jumped up on the back dual tire and grabbed the rack off the truck and walked along the bed of the truck. When I got to the opening there was just room to squeeze through. A soldier was standing at the opening with an M1 rifle in a vertical position. I said, "Move, so I can get in." He just stood like a statue and I said, "Move, so I can get in." He still didn't move so I pushed him out of the way and went in. I said, "I have the money for the 99th Division, what do you want to do with it." A soldier sitting in back of the desk told one of the other soldiers to help me unload it, which he did. I said, "Do you want me to sign anything?" He said, "No." So I went back to the soldier at the opening and told him I wanted out. When he didn't move I took him by the arm and moved him aside and went out, stepped on the tire and jumped to the ground, got in the truck. As I was leaving I noticed along the side of the planter a big bus with the top cut off about four inches below the seat tops. It looked weird and I stopped and looked at it for a few seconds and then went on. I got to the cross road and a jeep went by. He was really flying. He waved at me and said, "Come on."

I got back to the town and was parking my truck between a large manure pile and the house, but then I decided to park it in back of the house. I walked up to the aid station. When I went in everyone turned pale. The major said, "Myers, where did you take that money?" I said, "To the Red Cross, where you told me to take it." He said, "You are lying to me." I said, "No sir, I am not." I then told him what the town looked like and described the big brick courtyard with the planter and told him where the Red Cross was located. He said, "That town was taken before you left here." I said, "Thanks a lot!" Then everything came to mind--the soldier at the back of the truck I now realized was a German instead of an American. The floor inside the building was covered with splattered blood and there were scrapes all over the front of the counter. To the right was a large pile with an old field tent covering it. It had cobwebs and mud all over it. I never suspected a thing because all the soldiers had American uniforms with the red crosses on their arms. I now realized that they must have lined up the American soldiers and forced them to take off their clothes, shot them, and then dressed in the American uniforms. They all looked clean and I never thought of them all being Germans. They all had M1 rifles. The only clue that anything was wrong was the blood on the floor. But, after all, it was the Red Cross building so I didn't question that. I felt that my guardian angle had surely protected me during that trip.

The next morning was December 16. I looked out and the Germans were coming across the field. I went up to the aid station and aid, "What are we doing here? The Germans are only a couple of hundred feet away and headed in this direction." The major said, "Myers, you are crazy." I said, "It would do you good to come and look for yourself." He looked out and then told me to go down to see the colonel. I went to the colonel and asked him the same question: "What are we doing here?" He said we were supposed to hold, no matter what it costs. I went back and told the major, and he sent us back to the colonel. When we got there an announcement came over the radio that we were surrounded. The colonel jumped up, grabbed some stuff from his desk and said, "Everyone for himself and the hell with the rest of them."

I got the truck and went by the aid station. If we had been a few seconds later we could

(Continued on next page)

have had a truck load of Germans. They stood on the banks along the road and watched us go by and didn't even fire a shot.

We got back to Murringen and soon got a call for medics. Another medic, Lanier, and I went out and found two men. One was lying face down in the snow. I said, "This is the fellow down here we need," and Lanier said, "Yes, this other fellow is dead." When he said that I looked back the fellow lifted his head. We went back and rolled him over. Snow and ice was all frozen to his face. I took my scissors and cut the snow from his nose and mouth so he could breathe. We carried him back and when we took him into the aid station the major said, "Take him to the morgue." I backed out of the room and said to Lanier, "We will put him in this other room and we'll take care of him." The major found out and told us we were wasting our time.

The soldier had been hit in the head with shrapnel and a part of his skull was turned like a flap, but connected on both sides. It was tight and we worked around it and got his brains back in his head. Then we moved him from Murrigen to the B Company clearing station which had been evacuated. We kept our badly injured patient in the air raid station with us.

Around midnight we were told that we were going to make a break for it at 2:00 a.m. We loaded all the wounded on the truck and got orders from the major to leave our injured friend. He said he was going to die anyway. But we got him on the truck and transported him to a hospital.

On our way out that night we fought the 2nd Division. They thought we were the Germans and we were told to leave our vehicles and walk. We walked down the road about a mile and then they said, "Go back." We were like a drove of cattle, not knowing where to go. I got back to the truck I was driving and asked the wounded if they were all right. They said they were, but the weapons carrier two cars back was hit and blown to pieces. I looked back and it looked as if a man was sitting in the vehicle behind it. I went back and it was a full field pack with a helmet sitting on it. I started back to my truck and a German opened up with a burp gun.

I put one hand over my face and the other over my heart and fell in the ditch. He came up over the hill and across the road where I was laying and dropped his knee down by my side. My heart sounded like somebody beating on an anvil, it seemed so loud. I lay there and he kept shooting. I realized later that he was shooting at wheat shocks that were on the hill.

After awhile he gasped and fell backwards. I stayed there for a while in fear that if I got up I would be shot. Finally, I crawled away and came out where our infantry men were standing. I said, "Do you know where I was a minute ago?" Then I told them I was lying underneath that German who was shooting up on the hill. One of the infantrymen told me that when the bright light went off he could see the guy and shot him. I didn't see the bright light because I had my face buried in the snow.

We stayed around until nearly daylight and they sent a patrol and found that we were Americans instead of Germans. So they let us through and we took the wounded to the hospital. When we arrived I told the colonel if they were going to do anything for this fellow they had better do it quickly. Then we went back and carried in another soldier. When we went back into the hospital there were six people working on him, rubbing him and giving him shots.

We were sent to shower and change clothes and eat. When I came back later I went in to see how he was getting long. I asked him how he was doing and he said, "I fell out of bed and have a headache."

He was sent back to the States and I thought that was the last time I would see him.

After Murringen we went to Aachen and got replacements and went back up to Elsenborne Ridge. I went out to get oil for our lights. When I got to the ammunition dump I went down into an air raid shelter. As I got there a liaison officer called for white phosphorus. The colonel came on the walkie talkie and said it was against the Geneva Convention. The liaison officer said, "Who is fighting with it. We have eight German tanks coming straight at us." So the colonel gave him white phosphorus and the Americans fired one mortar and the liaison officer said, "You have it zeroed in--pour it on." Then the whole sky filled up with shooting fire, all colors of the rainbow, and it melted those tanks down over the tracks. I got the oil for our lights and returned to the aid station.

Two nights later, I was asked to take my truck and go back to get the mail. We had not gotten any mail for two weeks. I said, "That truck is too big and with no load on it, it won't have much traction in the snow and ice. If you will give me the shop truck, I will go." So they gave me the shop truck and Tomat said, "I will go with you." I was glad for company so we started out.

We had no lights but there was enough shell fire that the road was well lit for us. Sometimes we would have to stop, but it was never very long until the shell fire would again light the way for us.

When we got to where we were to pick up the mail, there was so much that the back of the truck was stuffed full of mail. Then we started back. When we got to the long grade uphill to Elsenborne, I said to Tomat, "Look on the left ridge. There is a patrol coming toward us." We kept looking and when we got up to where they were, men were lying in the ditches on both sides of the road. I kept driving as fast as I could, which was 15 to 25 miles per hour. We had a bar on the side of the truck, a 50 caliber machine gun on the roof with a belt of ammunition for it, and Tomat had an M1 rifle, but not one of the soldiers got up. Tomat kept looking back as we passed through them with no trouble. The angels were with us again.

There were many more memorable experiences. But back to our friend who "fell out of bed." He was a driver for Service Company 394 at the time of his terrible head injury. His name is George Serkedakis.

After the war ended and I came back home, I took up my plumbing trade. I met and worked for Serkedakis' sister and kept in touch with him through her. About nine years later I was driving down 18th Street in Washington, DC, when I came to a red light I looked over in the car next to me and there, to my surprise, was Serkedakis. I tapped my horn and said, "Serkey!" We parked in a nearby parking lot and talked for hours! He told me that he had been conscious and had heard the major tell us to take him to the morgue. He also heard me say, "We will put him in the next room and we'll take care of him."

He has a metal plate in his head where the shrapnel hit him, but 50 years later we are both alive and exchanging war stories. Serkedakis lives about five miles from my home and we get together often.

He would like to hear from anyone who remembers him: George Serkedakis, 10600 Hayes Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20902.◘

THIS IS THE WAY IT WAS

Alan W. Layton
770th Field Artillery Battalion, Battery B

As a life member of VBOB, I have felt many times to write and tell what happened to our 770th Field Artillery unit. Little did we know when General Remke surrendered at Brest and he foiled their escape to Crozon, that we would follow the First and Third Armies across France and Belgium and rendezvous in an area 25 miles due east of Bastogne on the German border.

Our gun positions were located in the Burg Reuland, Laschied, Durler, Oudler area. My Baker Battery was positioned in a defiladed wooded area and there were literally thousands of poles that the Germans had prepared for communications lines. Two of my men, from the gun sections, had built cabins in Maine and Wisconsin. Inasmuch as we were in a "quiet sector" behind the 106th Infantry Division, we started building cabins for the expected bad weather. We built 26 cabins and a mess hall 30' x 60'.



Captain Layton and Sergeant Todd--cabin area 25 miles east of Bastogne, November-December, 1944.

Battalion headquarters was in Oudler in houses. We were making ourselves comfortable in the woods. With the limited supply of our semi-fixed ammunition, our forward OP's, with the 106th Division, were finding it hard to find suitable targets.

Our wire section tapped in to the Belgium power lines and with light fixtures lifted from shot up houses, many of the cabins had lights. Our battery-powered radio gave access to the BBC News.

We were sitting there fat until December 16 when everything broke loose. Quotes from our "After Action" reported the following:

It was hell every day. Withdraw. Go into a firing position. Pick up stragglers from the 106th Division. We even had a master sergeant from his "shot up" outfit helping our mess sergeant. From gun positions in Aldringen, Gouvy, Charma, Houfalize, LaRoche, St. Vith, Vielsalm, Samree, Ciney, Bailonville, Lambermont, Dinant, Sedan we finally followed units into Bastogne and moved eastward through out old gun positions in Laschied.

The Germans had a lot of horse drawn artillery, and they had used our mess hall to stable their horses. The German soldiers ere hurting for food and we observed many dead horses where the hindquarters had been cut off. Dead GI's were everywhere. Some of their combat boots missing. A wallet lying there with pictures of loved ones scattered about. It wasn't a pleasant scene. Graves registration troops were gathering up the frozen bodies.

With all the devastation, I knew it was a big mine field and I protested when Col. Burnett assigned this gun position near Prum, west of Coblenz, Germany. I said we'd lose some men and probably some of our vehicles. But he explained that was our assignment from Gen Troy Middleton, our Corps Commander.

Well, I got blown to bits by a Regal Mine, evacuated through an aid station with Capt. Wolfe our Battalion doctor, ambulance to a field hospital and then a hospital train to Paris. Then air-evaced to the 154th General Hospital in Swindon, England. More surgery, then a hospital ship to the "good old USA." Then on a hospital train to Bushnell General Hospital in Brigham City, Utah.◘

FRANK WANTS TO KNOW

I would like very much to be in a position to write an actual legend for the "Living Legends," however I have returned from the war with no remembrance of happenings during the Battle of the Bulge. I have attended several of our annual meetings hoping to hear something that would "bring it all back."

Records indicate that I served with the 2nd Infantry Division, both with the 9th and 23rd Infantry Regiments. I was in Malmedy in a rest area on December 16, 1944, the date the battle began. From that time until January 19, 1945, the date of my being injured, I have no recollection. My records indicate that I was wounded in Weimes, Belgium, and was in hospitals in Leige, Paris and England for a period of two to three months. Immediately after returning to the Continent, the war ended and I was selected to be assigned to the U.S. Embassy Mission to the Netherlands.

I attended the 50th Anniversary meeting that was held in St. Louis. That same year I went back to Belgium to some of the areas where we fought. Malmedy, where it all began for me and to Weimes where I was injured. Nothing brings back a memory to me. Hopefully, I may receive a message from someone who knew me.

Frank H. Thaxton, Jr.
9316 Midvale Drive
Shreveport, Louisiana 71118

DON'T FORGET OUR NEW YEAR'S TOAST

In tribute to all who served in the Battle of the Bulge, let's all drink a toast again this year. The choice of beverage is yours. Again this year the time will be: Noon—Pacific time; 1:00 p.m.—Mountain time; 2:00 Central time; and 3:00 Eastern time.

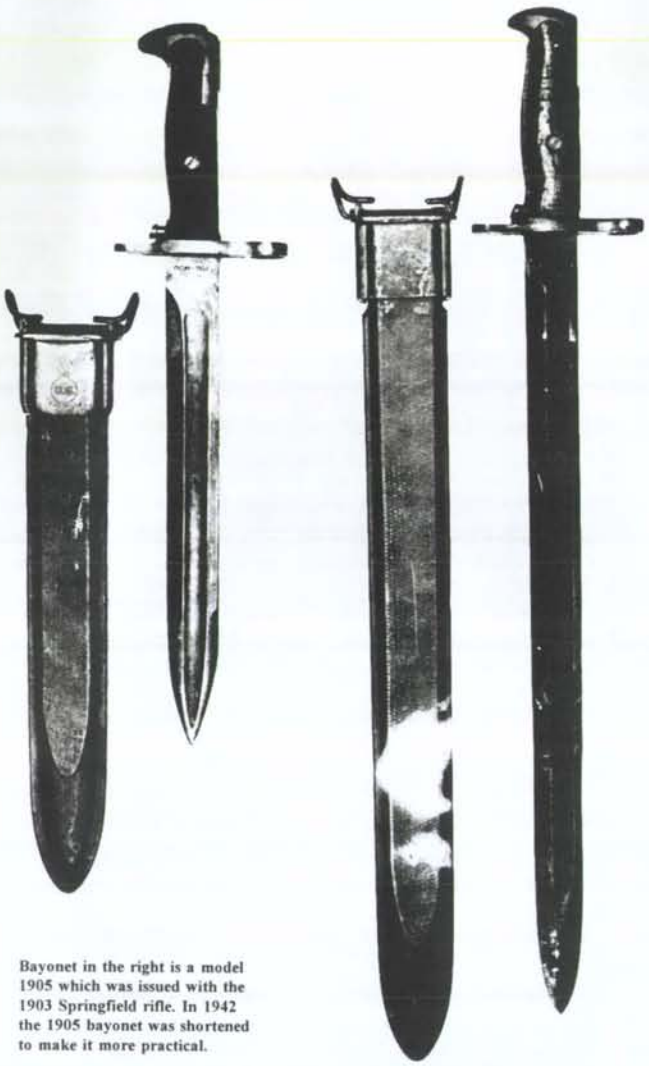
It's a way we can all be together again, even it is only in our thoughts. We shared so much so many years ago, we should remember those we were with and be grateful for each and every one. HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES.◘

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

By Howard Peterson
4th Armored Division
51st Armored Infantry Battalion, CCA

Webster defines a bayonet as a dagger like device, fitted to the muzzle of a musket or a rifle.

There will always be controversy about whether the pistol was named for Pistoia, Italy, but not the bayonet, which was named for Bayonne, France.



Bayonet in the right is a model 1905 which was issued with the 1903 Springfield rifle. In 1942 the 1905 bayonet was shortened to make it more practical.

The bayonet cannot destroy factories. It is not a fearsome weapon beyond thrust range. It is simple in appearance, uncomplicated in design, yet deadly in purpose. In the hands of the right person, at the right time, under the right circumstances, it can be the most terrifying weapon on earth. It is the threat of a bayonet and the sight of the point that will cause an enemy to surrender before flesh is pierced when it is realized that the wielder is endowed with the moral will if and when necessary.

The principle of the bayonet dates back to the Middle Ages when foot troops needed protection with the Ake. During the wars of the 16th and 17th Centuries, weapons employing the use of gunpowder reduced the need for pikemen to protecting a Spanish square of musketeers while they loaded their cumbersome weapons. When the wheel lock replaced the harquebus, the pikemen disappeared. But there was still a need for the musketeer to protect himself.

The first bayonets were inserted into the muzzle of the musket when needed, rendering the weapon useless. Early in the 18th Century a socket bayonet was developed that fit onto the musket without plugging the barrel. During the 18th Century armies consisted mostly of foot troops in which the musket and bayonet became standard weapons, but the slow rate of fire, short range, and inherent unreliability of the musket made the bayonet as important as the musket. Eighteenth and 19th Century armies relied on artillery and the bayonet to produce shock action.

To obtain maximum effort from the bayonet, during the Thirty Years' War, Gustavis Adolphus, the King of Sweden, and great military innovator, discarded the Spanish Square tactic of Napoleon Bonepart and deployed his troops in line formation. European armies quickly adopted line formations, especially during the French wars of Louis the XIV.

During the American revolution, General George Washington was convinced that his Colonial Army must be schooled in the use of the bayonet when stolid British "Regulars" routed his "upstart rabble" time and again with the bayonet. The use of a bayonet was easy to teach. A bayonet thrust took little time, was deadly because it penetrated the body, and the line formation remained stable.

It was not until the years following the Franco-Prussian War that tactics changed. The French High Command conducted an intense analysis into the cause for their defeat and the dominating factor emerging was the aggressiveness of the individual Prussian soldier with the bayonet, so the High Command concluded, "...in future wars, it must be the attack, always the attack, as the true means of forcing a favorable decision. The action of foot troops must be a constant pressing forward until the enemy can be fronted with the bayonet and will produce elan and Esprite de Corps. Colonel de Grandmaison, Chief of Operations of the French Grand Army Staff decreed, "Only two things are necessary. Where the enemy is and how to reach him with the bayonet. From the moment of the first action, every soldier must ardently desire the assault with the bayonet as a means of impressing his will upon the enemy. Officers who concentrate the bayonet at the decisive point, at the decisive time, will win."

Then the Germans invented the weapon that British Field Marshall Sir Douglas Haig considered, "A highly overrated weapon," the machine gun, with inter-lacing fire. The machine gun was most effective against massed bayonet assaults. The way to silence a machine gun was to attack it with the bayonet.

The American ideals fostered by George Washington are indispensable and form an aggressiveness in the individual soldier. "Fix bayonets" still stirs elan and Esprite de Corps in most troops. It instills confidence and emphasizes the raw savagery of close combat, and the skill necessary to do a job efficiently and effectively. It can also represent the soldier's final chance for survival.

The real strength of a bayonet lies in its use by troops who are physically and mentally alert to its demands and stands as a symbol to an aggressive spirit and a determination to be free.

7TH ARMORED TAKES ST. VITH

[The following article appeared in the Stars & Stripes (date not available. It was written by Russel Jones and forwarded to us by STEVE COWAN, 7TH ARMORED DIVISION, 23RD ARMORED INFANTRY REGIMENT, BATTERY A]

Tanks, Joes Win Vital Road Hub

With First Army, January 23--St. Vith, the Germans last stronghold of any consequence on the First Army' sector of what once was a "bulge," was recaptured today by the Seventh Armored Division.

Tanks and armored infantry drove 1,000 yards into the key road hub early in the afternoon. After a house-to-house battle which lasted three hours and 45 minutes, the forces under Brig. Gen. Bruce C. Clark, of Syracuse, New York, had cleared it of the enemy.

Meanwhile the 75th Division took Braunslauf and Maldange and was fighting tonight in Aldringen, three and one-half miles southwest of St. Vith. The 30th Infantry Division moved 2,000 yards to points southwest of St. Vith.

Planes Blast Vehicles

Ninth TAC flew 466 sorties today against an estimated 2,500 enemy vehicles, after having a record day yesterday along the road north of Prum to Bonn. It claimed 652 motor transport vehicles destroyed, 749 damaged; 26 armored vehicles destroyed, 19 damaged; 80 railroad cars destroyed, 178 damaged; three locomotives destroyed, one damaged; one fuel dump and one ammunition dump destroyed, railroad breaks in 14 spots, and destruction of six gun sites while three more were damaged.

Seventh Armored's attack started at 2:00 p.m. with simultaneous drives by task forces under Lt. Col. Richard Chappius, of Lafayette, Louisiana, coming down the Malmedy-St. Vith road, and under Lt. Col. Marvin L. Rhey, of Chicago, coming from the patch of woods 1,500 yards straight north of St. Vith.

The task forces, made up of tanks and armored industry backed by parachutists commanded by Lt. Col. Richard T. Seitz, of Leavenworth, Kansas, pushed into the outskirts of the town in the face of small arms fire from Germans dug-in on the eastern edge and with artillery fire hitting them from the vicinity of Wallerode, 4,000 yards to the east.

Third Clears Its Sector

Paris, January 23--Third Army forces, paced by the four-mile advance of the 17th Airborne Division, drove the enemy out of all Belgian territory today between Houffalize and the Luxembourg frontier.

American artillery joined fighter-bombers in blasting fleeing German convoys which choked the snow-packed roads toward Germany. The remaining salient in Luxembourg was tottering under Third Army blows north of Diekirch.

In the graveyard of the Ardennes was buried the striking force of three powerful German armies and the hopes of the German High Command of a stalemate in the West.

While the German withdrawal was even and methodical, the fact that armor and transport were being rushed out in daylight was evidence that mounting Allied pressure had made the German position west of the Siegfried Line critical.

In Holland, attacking British troops extended their right flank toward Heinsburg, an important road center, and captured Valdenrath, Laffeld and Obspringen as well as a string of four villages lying between these towns.

In Alsace, powerful French forces continued their attack along the Mulhouse-Thann road.

In Again



Last Out, First In--7th at St. Vith

St. Vith, January 23--The Seventh Armored Infantry was back in town tonight, one month to the day from the night they evacuated after holding five days--three days longer than they had been ordered to--and knocking the German break-through so far off schedule that other First Army units were able to get farther west where they stopped the threat.

The last Seventh Armored outfit to pull out of St. Vith that cold night of December 23 was an armored infantry battalion under Lt. Col. Richard D. Chappius, of Lafayette, Louisiana. Today Chappius commanded the task force which spearheaded the attack on the town.

Bitter Fight Going and Coming

The Germans were swarming over the Seventh's positions when they evacuated St. Vith and Chappius had to fight hard to get out. Today, although the Germans are retreating, they had to fight to get back in. The armored infantry led the attack, jumping off from Hunningen, 1,000 yards up the Malmedy-St. Vith road.

When they moved off the road into the fields, some of the men seemed to disappear into shadows which left tracks as they struggled over the snow. They were the men with the new snow suits. Others were yellow blotches in the white glare because their suits were stained with many wettings of snow melted in the dim heat of foxholes.

The infantry moved slowly, ducking briefly during the intermittent screaming of the Nebelwerfers--six-barreledmortars--hitting the road junction behind them, the road in front of them, and sometimes hitting them. They were armored infantry but right then they were like any other infantry--plodding toward the enemy with only their weapons to protect them.

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12 HOURS IN STAVELOT

*[The following was written by **JOHN V. PEHOVIC, 526TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION,** for inclusion in a book, entitled Ardennes 44--Stavelot, by Hubert Laby, of Belgium. Mr. Laby's book has been published in French. When it is available in English, we will publish a notice.]*

My personal feelings have always been that the 12-hour period at Stavelot, from midnight of the 17th of December until 12000 hours on the 18th of December, was a crucial period that ranks in significance with top recorded battles in history. The tragic events that would have occurred is too large to contemplate had the Germans gained access to one of the largest supplies of gasoline in Europe.

The true significance was never disclosed heretofore because nobody took the time and effort to officially record and publicize the event. The 526th AIB was a comparatively small, separate unit with a secret mission, assigned to 12th Army group "T" Force. Consequently, the unit was sheltered and insulated from the usual news media; in fact, its very existence was known to only a relatively few people. Other military units had publicity teams whose purpose was to boost and maintain morale, especially among the folks back home. In contrast, the policy of "T" Force was to down-play our activity--thus no publicity....

The battle at Stavelot erupted with such quick dynamic force that it almost defies description. A full pitched battle developed and was underway as soon as the task force arrived. We knew nothing of the terrain, there were no lines of communication, we had no idea what troops were in the area, nor what this disposition was--we moved into a complete vacuum with no time to evaluate the situation nor time to develop a plan of resistance. All orders were conceived and given "on the fly."

I'm sure from the information you already have that you gained a good picture of the situation; nevertheless, I'm taking the liberty to take you back in time to when we were first alerted on the 17th of December and narratively carry you forward to approximately noon on the 18th of December when elements of the 1st Battalion, 117th Infantry arrived.

When the Battalion was alerted on the afternoon of the 17th of December, the information initially received was very sketchy. We were told essentially that there was a major breakthrough by the Germans in the Ardennes; that an American unit had been captured and massacred in the general vicinity of Malmedy; and the Battalion was to go to Malmedy.

Word was also received that the infamous Skorzeny was given the task to capture Eisenhower thus we were to be on alert for parachutists and also Germans wearing U.S. uniforms and driving U.S. vehicles.

At the time the Battalion was billeted in various communities south of Liege.

By late afternoon the companies began assembling. Despite the early darkness and confusing traffic heading westward, the rendezvous was accomplished without any major problems.

Considering the conditions facing the Battalion the spirit and morale were exceptionally high. There was frequent stop-and-go movement and meetings among the higher echelons caused numerous changes in plans and strategy. Finally Lt. Col Irwin, the Battalion Commander, received orders to send a task force to Stavelot to stem the drive the Germans were mounting in that area. Major Solis, the Battalion Executive Officer, was put in command of the task force. Major solis requested that I also be assigned to the team. My initial reaction was disappointment because I wanted to go to Malmedy where I thought all the action was going to take place. How wrong I was.

Captain Sheetz, of the 291st Engineer Battalion, met the task force when it neared Stavelot. As I recall the night was extremely dark, making it exceptionally difficult to move about in the village. I became separated from Major Solis and it took me about 15 minutes to locate him. What I considered impressive about our entrance was the fact that, in spite of the darkness, Captain Mitchell was able to get his troops and vehicles deployed and into position in a relatively short time which was a good thing because almost immediately all hell seemed to break loose.

The situation was very fluid and uncertain. Solis and Mitchell had moved into Captain Sheetz's CP located in a big brick building facing the river and near the bridge. The situation, as Captain Sheetz informed us, was that he had earlier set up two road blocks across the river; one on the road to Baugnez and the others on the road to Wanne. Little did Sheetz, or any of us for that matter, know that those two outposts were pitted against the onslaught of one of the more famous crack armored divisions which formed the backbone of the German blitzkrieg.

Because radio communication had been quickly lost to the Baugnez road block, Captain Sheetz sent a two-man patrol in a jeep to reestablish contact. About a half mile beyond the bridge the jeep came under enemy fire and the driver was badly wounded. The other man managed to get out of the jeep and was able to return to the command post. That briefing was the last time I saw Captain Sheetz. Thus I am unable to comment about the collaboration between A Company and the Engineers.

With Sheetz's information in hand, Captain Mitchell immediately organized a relief to locate and return the wounded mn and to also reestablish the road block. The wounded man was located; however, the relief force itself quickly came under fire and while trying to extricate itself discovered that the Germans were using American vehicles, and also had already infiltrated in to the homes along the sides of the road, and were firing into the vehicles from second story windows. Radio traffic was extremely heavy and it was difficult to get a clear picture of the situation or to understand the messages because the operators were interfering with each other.

While this tense situation was unfolding a guard brought in a "G.I." that had been found near the CP. We had been alerted earlier that some or Skorzeny's people were being infiltrated and parachuted behind our lines. They reportedly were to try to capture Eisenhower, to disrupt traffic by altering directional traffic signs and in general, raise as much trouble and havoc as possible. In spite of this warning the interrogation of this "G.I." was perfunctorily carried out because we were concerned about the fire-fight then going on across the river. Because of this distraction his answers did not immediately arouse suspicion. For example, he said he worked for the burgermeister. That should have alerted us because military government was not operational in the area. Then he said he lost his helmet when he started to run when the firing began. (We found out later that the lack of a helmet was one of the features that Skorzeny's men used to distinguish themselves from the American G.I.) He also spoke in broken English. This did not seem strange or unusual to me because I grew up in northern Michigan and Minnesota where many 1st generation Americans spoke broken English. Besides some of the interrogators and translators in "T" Force spoke in broken English.

While the interrogation was going on the situation across the river was becoming more desperate. Consequently, everyone's attention was drawn to that problem and the "G.I." was finally told to get out of the CP and return to his unit. It was not until several days later that it began to register that his answers were questionable and that he could have been one of Skorzeny's agents.

More and more information kept coming in that the Germans were using American vehicles including half-tracks. This information, coupled with the fact that the Germans had already infiltrated as far into Stavelot as the bridge, caused Major Solis to direct that all troops be pulled back to the western side of the river and that defenses be beefed up around the bridge. While I'm not certain about the big guns of the tank destroyer platoon, I do know some of A Company's anti-tank guns were moved into positions to cover the eastern approaches to the bridge.

It was still fairly dark therefore, to improve visibility of the bridge, some enterprising individuals set on fire some make-shift flares from old oil drums which illuminated the eastern end of the bridge. This created a tremendous lull

(Continued on next page)

in the German advance, nevertheless, they soon attempted to get a wheeled vehicle across the bridge. One of the anti-tank guns quickly destroyed the vehicle. The Germans brought up a tank that towed the wreck off the bridge. A tank next attempted to cross but it was quickly immobilized. The Germans then brought up a monstrously huge Tiger Royal tank which pulled the wrecked tank from the bridge. The anti-tank guns proved ineffective against the Tiger Royal.

In the meantime, Major Solis had gotten in touch with Battalion Headquarters in Malmedy and had requested that the Battalion assault guns be sent to Stavelot and he also asked for artillery support. By this time it was obvious that the Germans had an overwhelming force and we had nothing that could stop the Tiger Royal tanks.

In the early morning light it quickly became apparent that the CP was too vulnerable. Its entrance faced the river and the building would be one of the first to be overrun if the Germans got across. Major Solis ordered us to move to the center of the town.

Major Solis at this time directed me to reconnoiter the area and to get an overall evaluation of our situation. In the town square I ran into Lt. Goddard, the commander of the Battalion Reconnaissance Platoon. It seems that Major Solis's request for artillery support brought to a head a problem that was confronting all units moving into Malmedy-Stavelot area. The irony of the situation was not immediately apparent because Stavelot was the army Map Depot yet no one had detailed large scale maps of the area. The artillery didn't know where to lay down indirect fire because they did not have maps. We did not have appropriate maps to plot the coordinates that we wanted covered. Lt. Col. Irwin ordered Goddard to Stavelot to get the necessary maps.

The situation at the river was very tenuous. No one was aware of anything beyond his immediate area. Consequently, when Goddard arrived he was unable to find anyone who could help him. By sheer luck, we ran into each other and the only reason I was able to help was because the CP had earlier been located in the Map Depot.

By this time it was very light and I knew we couldn't return directly to the old CP because the entrance was under observation and fire from the Germans. I had earlier tried in vain to find an entrance on the west side of the building in order to recover my trench coat which I had left behind. I figured, however, we could successfully approach the entrance from the south end of the building. Once inside we were faced with another dilemma. The building contained hundreds of thousands of maps but there was no one around who knew the storage system. We finally found an index and thus were able to determine and locate what we needed.

While we were there I searched for my trench coat but could not find it. I did nevertheless find a strange, sturdy, camouflage coat that had a lot of zippered pockets so I appropriated it. (This leads to another incident which I'll describe later.)

Goddard and I retraced our route from the building and he was soon on his way back to Malmedy.

I encountered Major Solis in the town square. We were having difficulty getting information from the elements along the river so I suggested to Major Solis that we put a couple of observers with radios up in the church steeple. We were about 100 yards from the church. One would almost think the Germans were listening to our conversations. A German machine gun began to chatter and a bright reddish scar appeared where the bullets smashed into the bricks just beneath the opening at the top of the steeple.

About the same time a lady approached us. She was wearing a steel helmet with a red cross painted on it and she was carrying another steel helmet that was full of carbine ammunition which she gave to us. Although we did not speak French or German and she did not speak English, she managed to convey the idea that she would help us if we needed medical attention. (I regret that I did not get that lady's name. In 1956 I visited Stavelot and tried to find her in order to thank her for her kindness but I was unsuccessful. If you are aware of this incident or know the lady I would appreciate learning her name.)

Incidentally, that was the last time I saw Major Solis that morning because he wanted me to continue reconnoitering the area. I worked my way around and up the high ground west of town. I encountered stacks of gasoline in five gallon cans and to my consternation, could not locate any guards. As I started back into Stavelot, I stopped several of our half-tracks heading west. I made them turn around and had them take up positions about half way down the hill along what appeared to be an old road bed. From this high ground we had a clear view of the river bank and the machine guns would provide a good base of fire to support the defenders in town. About this time one of the platoons, mounted in their half-tracks, passed me going toward the gas dump so I figured they had been sent there to guard the facility.

After positioning the half-tracks I continued on foot into town when I met Captain Mitchell. After exchanging information on the situation Captain Mitchell continued up the hill in the direction of the gas dump. I, in turn, worked my way back to the town square where I expected to find Major Solis. Instead I found only a couple of men from the Engineer Map Unit who said their unit had left without them. They said they understood the order had been given to pull back to the high ground west of Stavelot.

By this time, the road leading to the high ground and the gas dump was under direct observation by the Germans and under continuous small arms fire which made me feel that the route was badly infiltrated already. I figured the best thing was to move to the southern edge of the village and then move to the high ground. I ordered the men to follow me and as we moved I became acutely aware that we were the only Americans in sight around there. As we progressed we encountered more individuals, however, not from the 526th but rather from units that had pulled out or they had become separated from their outfits.

I soon had a sizeable force of about 30 men. As we continued our move it became apparent that the Germans were getting close on our heels so I created three fire teams to help our withdrawal. Our plan was for one team to rapidly fire into the intersections and buildings in the direction of the Germans. The next team would set up about 30 to 50 yards further along our route and the third team would in turn set up beyond the second team. When the first team would start to withdraw the second team would cover them with fire. The first team would draw back and take up positions beyond the third team.

This tactic proved successful because we noticed the Germans slowed and then finally stopped their advance. We finally drew back to an area where we had some fair cover and concealment in order to move to the high ground. By this time we could hear the ominous clanking and creaking of tank treads. We had climbed about 100 yards up the hill when three huge Tiger Royal (Mark VI) tanks went by on the road toward Papfondruy or Trois Ponts.

I wanted to continue to observe the enemy but it was soon apparent that the men were anxious to get out of the area so I released them. A couple of men stayed with me.

Soon there was a steady stream of enemy traffic heading south. There was nothing we could do to stop or impede the Germans but we continued to watch them for about 30 minutes then we decided to move on. We gained the top of the hill then turned in a northerly direction toward the gap dump where one of the stacks was burning. It appeared that it would not be too much of a problem for German vehicles to bypass the burning stack so I decided to spread the fire.

We found that simply shooting into the cans would not ignite them. When the top row of cans were ruptured however, the gas flowed down toward the stack that was burning. The resulting eruptions and explosions were like the infernos of hell turned loose on the countryside. The fires spread back to several more stacks and our fears and concern then was that maybe the entire dump would burn.

During this period we did not see any other military personnel so we started walking. About a mile further on we ran into Captain Mitchell and his men. In a few minutes the *(continued on next page)*

STAVELOT

lead elements of the First Battalion, 117th Infantry, arrived.

Lt. Col Frankland, CO of the 1st Battalion, 117th Infantry, after being briefed, had his battalion detruck and formed into assault formation with a company deployed on each side of the road. These troops were battle hardened veterans who had been in combat almost continuously from Normandy on. I accompanied the point squad. This caused some raised eyebrows because never before had a 1st lieutenant accompanied them. I must say I admired their professionalism because we regained the town square very quickly.

Hanging onto the town square was another matter because it did not take very long before the Germans dressed in U.S. uniforms and driving American vehicles stormed the town square. To the great credit of Col. Frankland's men, they quickly recognized the deception and turned back the attacks by the Germans.

The commanding officer of the 117th Infantry had arrived with his staff and took over one of the farm houses as his command post. About this same time the 526th assault guns that Major Solis had requested arrived on the scene. These guns, as well as A Company, were assigned areas of responsibility and integrated into the plans of the 117th Infantry.

Major Solis and I stayed with the 117th Infantry until the 19th of December when we returned to our battalion headquarters in Malmedy.

I mentioned earlier the incident of my acquiring an overcoat in the Map Storage building. The weather had turned bitterly cold so I wore that "new" overcoat constantly. On the 21st day of December I had to make a trip back to "T" Force Headquarters which was now located west of Liege. When I was getting ready to start my trip back to Malmedy, one of the interrogators said to me, "Lieutenant, your overcoat looks exactly like a German paratrooper's jacket. Everyone is looking for German infiltrators and you might get shot."

We figured that when we vacated the CP in the Map Depot some Germans must have sneaked into the building. One of them apparently took my trench coat and left his behind. When Lt. Goddard and I returned to the CP for maps, the Germans were hiding in the building and we were unaware.

In conclusion, let me speak directly to your questions concerning Major Solis. He was the overall commander of the 526th Task Force in Stavelot. He had radio communication with the Battalion Headquarters, however, his radio did not mesh with Lt. Doherty's Tank Destroyer Platoon nor the engineers. He could communicate with Captain Mitchell's radio but not the platoon leader's radio.

The battle in Stavelot actually started before we arrived, and before we even knew what the situation was like we had a full fledged battle underway. During the initial period Major Solis was in the CP (Map Storage Building) because it had a radio. Captain Mitchell soon left to be with his troops and to try to get them settled down. I never did see Major Solis and Captain Mitchell together after that, although I did see both of them at different times in Stavelot The tank destroyers were towed units that did not lend themselves to the door-to-door type fighting that occurred. Their greatest effectiveness occurred where they could be employed and sited in open areas. The exception was at the bridge where the big guns of the tank destroyers and the more highly mobile anti-tank guns of A Company performed outstandingly. I am at a loss concerning the engineers. There was close collaboration initially. I cannot even recall when Captain Sheetz departed. I wish to add that some of the men I gathered together as I was leaving Stavelot did belong to Captain Sheetz's unit.

I wish to add another aspect to this account because I believe it had a profound overall effect. I mentioned that the 526th was a separate unit with a special mission. We were the "fighting" element of "T" Force. The mission of "T" Force was to apprehend and capture specially designated personalities and specially selected building targets. Our companies, in turn, were broken down into highly mobile, hard hitting, target teams that were expected to operate with a lot of autonomy, were expected to be self-sufficient, and capable of independently securing their targets without support, help or detailed supervision.

I believe what happened was that when the fire-fights started, A Company personnel subconsciously reverted to their team concept. I believe instead of a single battle occurring, in reality there were about 20 independent fights going on, each superbly interacting without the knowledge or recognition of each other.

When I joined Captain Mitchell and his men beyond the gas dump I was struck by the comparatively few men assembled. (Our battalion was huge--we were authorized 110% of our authorized TO & E. And each of our squads had the fire power of a platoon of regular infantry.) My initial fear was that we had suffered huge losses.

In actuality, we suffered surprisingly few casualties when the intensity of the battle is considered. As the fighting progressed, these target teams disappeared into the bowels of the building or rubble until the battle swept over them and would then resurface. There were many incidents where the same building was occupied by both A Company personnel and Germans.

When compared to the well disciplined and coordinated action of the highly trained and seasoned veterans of the 30th Infantry Division, the action of the task force might have appeared like the action of a mob out of control. However, to a skilled observer familiar with the training and mission of the 526th, it can only be considered one of the great good fortunes of the war that the 526 AIB was readily available and that this small task force was chosen to go to Stavelot. I strongly believe that no other unit in the army could have done as much as A Company, 526th AIB. They valiantly achieved their mission--they slowed the drive of Hitler's famous Liebstandarte until the arrival of the 117th Infantry, and they prevented the gas dump from falling into the hands of the enemy.

I confirm that the 526th AIB, and especially Company A, while they may bow their heads in deference to other famous units in the Army, they never have to bow in humility.

7TH ARMORED TAKES ST. VITH

(continued from Page 23)

Supported by Tanks Paratroopers

Behind the infantry were the tanks and parachutists under Lt. Col. Richard J. Seitz, of Leavenworth, Kansas.

The infantry and the tanks and the parachutists moved against the town, dripping out of sight in the hollows of the rough ground, coming up on the hills, going through the woods and finally disappearing for good into the houses on the edge of St. Vith. And while they moved, the constant road of artillery and mortars was punctuated by small arms fire, the rapid staccato of German guns breaking through the heavier rattle of the Americans'.

The Seventh's armored infantry was in St. Vith again.◘

YOUR DUES AND OUR SURVIVAL

If the date which appears on the first line at the extreme right on the mailing label used to mail this to you has passed--your dues are due. Reminders cost us money and down the road we're going to need every penny. So please check your dues date and mail your check if you're past due. Thanks!

WHAT IS FRIENDLY FIRE?

Howard Peterson
4th Armored Division
51st Armored Infantry Battalion

According to the learned Mr. Webster, "friendly fire" is the unintentional mistake of accidentally bringing harm to friendly troops during an armed conflict. It was one of the most dark and unpleasant facets of warfare that can happen to almost anyone, anywhere, at any time. Few people are familiar with, or even dare to discuss, friendly fire, or try to understand it, until the news media, desperate for something, which knows little about military history itself, 'rediscovers' friendly fire and then proceeds to flog it and berate it until the public begins to take notice and demands answers. What most people fail to comprehend is the fact that so-called friendly fire has actually been around since the beginning of warfare.

Before the invention of gun powder, it was not uncommon for foot soldiers, fighting in shoulder-to-shoulder ranks, in the heat and excitement of battle, to make the mistake of accidently taking a whack at a nearby comrade. This was even more common in armies that did not clothe their foot troops in some sort of distinctive apparel. Clothing foot troops in a national dress helped somewhat, but once the brawling and sword flailing started, it was easy to lose perspective as to who was who and it was Katie bar the door and everyman for himself.

History seems to give friendly fire little attention until well past Napoleon Boneparte's massed artillery barrages in the American Civil War, in which a metallic cartridge was invented that could be fired from a weapon with a rifle barrel, increasing the killing range tremendously, making it just that much more difficult to determine just who one was actually firing at, that armies began to show concern for friendly fire. Any bullet or artillery projectile, will keep on going until they hit whatever is in their trajectory. Bullets and artillery shell fragments do not distinguish between friend or foe.

Commanders have known about friendly fire for some time, and although they loathe it for what it does to troop morale, have tried to do all in their power to avoid it. Many people may liken a battlefield to a chaotic place, and they might be somewhat correct, at times. But much of the soldier's time and effort is spent in attempting to create as much order as possible. A soldier attempts to know where everyone is, or should be, both friend and foe. He attempts to know what everyone is supposed to do, should do, could do, or might do, both friend and foe, once the shooting starts. But the chaos ensues when both sides start mixing things up and people, both friend and foe, don't do what they are supposed to do, or are not where they are supposed to be, or are where they are not supposed to be. Result, communications and coordination of the best laid plans of mice and men go to hell and confusion reigns, and to make things even worse, many battles have a nasty habit of occurring at night. When one army is attacking and another army retreating, chaos is at its maximum.

If all of this is so, what causes friendly fire? Friendly fire comes in the form of many guises--a submarine torpedoes a friendly ship--anti-aircraft artillery shoot down friendly aircraft--off-shore naval gun fire falls on friendly troops--fighter planes strafe friendly troops and convoys--bombers drop their bombs on friendly troops helicopters rocket friendly tanks--artillery shell friendly troops and convoys--danger from flame throwers, mortars, machine guns, grenades and small arms fire. Worn artillery barrels that need replacing, defective artillery shells, causing 'short shots.

Stress, fear, panic take over, affecting the soldiers five senses, with sight and hearing the worst. Soldiers 'hear' things. What normally might have been an innocent sound is suddenly magnified and a soldier shoots first and asks questions later. A soldiers'see things and his imagination takes over. A soldier feels 'abandoned' and shoots at any sound or movement. Is the commander making the right decision? Could he? Should he? Would he? Did he? Modern, quick moving units need to handle rapidly changing situations which can put friendly infantry at risk, which puts a heavy psychological burden on everyone. In spite of all of the technological advances in tactics and weaponry, it is still the dirty, rotten, nasty job of the infantry to take the ground and hold it.

Bad news of friendly fire will travel further, and faster, with more manifold impact, than reality.

The Meaning of Shavetail

Also from Howard:

Did you know that an army second lieutenant is called a 'shavetail' from the cavalry days when the animals stood tail-to-tail in stables. A mule that had not been broken to army ways had its tail shaved so that anyone venturing too close be warned of the stupidity of that particular beast. ◘

FORT KNOX MUSEUM CITES 9TH ARMORED DIVISION

The Patton Museum of Cavalry and Armor, in Fort Knox, Kentucky, summarizes the activities of the 9th Armored Division in the Battle of the Bulge as follows:

"...at the outbreak of the Ardennes offensive on 16 December, 1944, three combat commands, due to their wide dispersion along the VII Corps front, were forced to fight separately.

"To the north, CCB, practically alone, held the vital town of St. Vith for 36 hours, then continued to fight with the 7th Armored Division after its arrival in that area.

"In the center, CCR with one of the most difficult missions in the Ardennes, slugged it out against overwhelming odds and, although suffering heavy casualties, including the loss of all three battalion commanders, was officially credited with delaying the enemy east of Bastogne for 48 hours before falling back, to fight with the 101st Airborne Division.

"To the south, CAA held a sector in the Beaufort area against everything the Germans threw at it until relieved to join the 4th Armored in breaking a corridor through to Bastogne."

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Proposed VA Amendments

By Mitchell Kaidy

Rallying to the support of combat veterans who are discriminated against because of the lack of records that characterized frontline combat, two national organizations have adopted resolutions endorsing the efforts of Rep. Thomas Reynolds of Erie County, NY to amend the VA regulations.

At their annual reunions in August, the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge and the 87th Infantry Division Association, both World War II outfits, criticized the V.A. Department for requiring combat veterans to produce records establishing both physical and psychological injuries, stating that frontline records didn't exist in that war, and psychological problems often developed years afterward. The two organizations adopted identical language amending Chapter 11, Section 1154 of the regulations.

The proposed language is as follows: "Positive consideration shall be accorded veterans without records where noise, enemy action, weather, or other elements, both direct and indirect, may be inferred or established by lay or other evidence, as a condition of war or hostility. Lay evidence of physical and psychological disorders may include sworn affidavits by fellow combatants."

In identical resolutions, the two organizations struck out at the VA Department for its unrealistic and discriminatory demands on World War II applicants, refusing, for example, to provide hearing aids unless the serviceman produced records to show that hearing traumas took place at specific times and places, and those traumas were recorded during combat.

Mitchell Kaidy, a member of both organizations who introduced the resolutions at both national conventions, said the amendment was necessary "because the VA bureaucrats haven't got the slightest understanding of the nature of combat. They seem to believe that during attacks and bombardments, someone went around examining soldiers and recording their reactions. They have to understand that combat soldiers are different. The combat zone is often characterized by high-decibel noise, and minor injuries later worsen and become threats to the soldier or sailor's health and well-being."

A delegation of combat veterans met with Rep. Reynolds and his staff last month in Rochester, NY. He agreed to introduce corrective legislation.

G.I. IMPERSONATES ST. NICHOLAS

. . . ritual started in 1994

For the fifth time since World War 11, Richard W. Brookins of Pittsford, NY has donned a bishop's miter and cassock, grasped a shepherd's staff, and performed a ritual he started in 1944—impersonating the long white-bearded St. Nicholas in Wiltz, Luxembourg.

When the ritual started just before the Battle of the Bulge, members of his 28th Infantry Division signal company suggested it might lift spirits and warm hearts on St. Nicholas Day, December 6, a day set aside for children. In that record-cold year, Wiltz lay in ruins from bombardments by both the German and American armies. Half the buildings had been leveled by artillery fire, food was scarce, and heating oil was virtually non-existent.

A Signal Corps photo taken in December 1944 shows Pvt. Richard Brookins, his costume hiding his GI clothes, riding in a jeep flanked by two female angels in white. Later the American troops collected candy, and the cooks baked cakes and doughnuts which were handed out to the children. The widely distributed photo appeared in the New York *Times* and other leading newspapers.

Brookins also has a copy of an Army film of the event showing children with gleaming faces on a dreary winter's day, gathered at a convent and later in a castle to see St. Nicholas, who traditionally distributed gifts to the obedient children. while his assistant handed sticks to the unruly.



Ten days after the first celebration, the Battle of the Bulge broke out. German troops overran Wiltz. The convent was bombed. Some of the children who received gifts from St. Nicholas were killed.

After the war, it took three years to repair Wiltz. To commemorate the restoration of their town, the people revived the St. Nicholas Day celebration, at first without Brookins and his buddies. Then in 1977, the town decided to seek out the St. Nicholas who presided at the first celebration, and traced the Rochester, NY native to his hometown.

Brookins continues to underscore the gratitude and goodwill exhibited by Luxembourgers toward their American liberators. When he and his wife Virginia returned a few years ago to renew the ceremony, a priest said over a loudspeaker: "If Luxembourg would stand another thousand years, we would always be grateful to the Americans and your most brave and valiant nation."

Richard Brookins is President of VBOB Genesee Valley NY Chapter

VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE CERTIFICATE



The Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge Assn is proud to offer a full color 11" by 17" certificate, which may be ordered by any veteran who received credit for the Ardennes Campaign. It attests that you participated in, endured and survived the greatest land battle ever fought by the US Army. You do not have to be a member of the VBOB Assn in order to order one but you must have received the Ardennes credit. This beautiful certificate is produced on parchment-like stock and is outlined by the full color WWII insignias of the major units that fought in the Battle of the Bulge starting with the 12th Army Group followed numerically with Armies, Corps and Divisions and the two Army Air Forces. We wished that each unit insignia could have been shown but with approximately 2000 units that participated in the Bulge it was impossible. However any unit which served in the Bulge would have been attached to or reported through one of the unit insignia depicted. You may want to add one of your original patches to the certificate, when you receive it. Units were researched in the Official General Order No. 114 for Units Entitled to the ARDENNES Battle Credit and will be the basis for sale of this certificate. The unit insignias shown are also those used in the design of the Battle of the Bulge Memorial Conference Table dedicated and on view in the Garrison Library at Ft Meade, MD (open Mon & Wed 12:30-3:00 PM. The requests to date have been overwhelming, therefore we would request that you allow approximately 3-4 weeks for delivery.

A Special Certificate is available to spouses or children of those who made the Supreme Sacrifice in the Battle of the Bulge or who died of wounds received in the Battle of the Bulge. The individual request should have the date and place of death and be certified by the family requestor or by a buddy who was present. Multiple copies of the same certificate may be ordered if you have a number of children/grandchildren. Rank or command during the Bulge is preferred. It will be abbreviated to the WWII or three character standard. The certificate will be shipped rolled in a protective mailing tube. Please be sure to **place your name, service number and unit as you would like it to appear on the certificate.** The unit name should as full as possible as you want someone reading it to understand what unit you were in. We will abbreviate it as necessary. It is important that you type or print this information. The unit must be one of the 2000 units authorized for the Ardennes Campaign credit. **The cost of the certificate is $15.00 postpaid.**

Unfortunately we do not have any more frames available at this time. John Bowen is presently trying to arrange with other suppliers who will produce these special sizes in quantities of 100. This may result in a higher frame cost. Our previous order had to be for 500 frames which took over three years to sell and resulted in the non use of a garage where they were stored. We will keep you posted.

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I request an 11" x 17" Certificate and certify that I received credit for the Ardennes Campaign during my military service. I have enclosed a check for $15.00 for the Certificate. Please include the following information that I would like on the certificate:

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Office of the Governor

PROCLAMATION

* BATTLE OF THE BULGE WEEK *

WHEREAS, on December 16, 1944 four German Armies under the command of Field marshal Gerd von Rudstedt struck the stunning blow against the light American forces with armor, infantry and artillery, which we now refer to as "The Battle of the Bulge" in our history books; and

WHEREAS, the courageous American forces took defense in actions by squads, platoons, individuals, and organized units the first four days, which denied success to the Germans; and

WHEREAS, the veterans who selflessly fought the largest land battle by American troops in World War II, deserve our highest respect and our most profound gratitude; and

WHEREAS, this State and Nation owe a great debt to those individuals who lost their lives in battle, and we hold this week as a time for honor and pride, a time for remembering, a time for celebration and a time to educate our younger generations about these days; and

WHEREAS, the State of Arizona recognizes and commemorates the efforts of the forces of the United States in the Belgian area during December 16, 1944 through January 25, 1945;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jane Dee Hull, Governor of the State of Arizona, do hereby proclaim December 14-20, 1998 as

* BATTLE OF THE BULGE WEEK *

and call upon all citizens of Arizona to join with others across the nation in honoring all veterans of World War II and especially those who were at "The Battle of the Bulge."

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the State of Arizona

Jane Dee Hull
GOVERNOR

DONE at the Capitol in Phoenix on this fourteenth day of December in the year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety-eight and of the Independence of the United States of America the Two Hundred and Twenty-second.

ATTEST: Betsey Bayless
Secretary of State

ARIZONA STATE MEETING
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Unit(s) to which assigned during period December 16, 1944 - January 25, 1945 - Division _____

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Make check or money order payable to VBOB and mail with this application to above address:

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